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No 17

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DECEMBER 25 1981

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MUSIC

The real business of the critic

By Charles Rosen

DAN H. LAURENCE (Editor):
Shaw's Music
The complete music criticism in
three volumes
Volume I: 1876-1890
957pp. 0 370 30247 8
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"Who am I that I should be just?"
wrote Shaw in reply to a letter to the
editor of the Star from an aggrieved
member of the Globe orchestra
who had played Edward German's
incidental music to Shakespeare's
Richard III. Shaw had reviewed the
production of Richard Mansfield
at the invitation of the Star's dramatic
critic, A. B. Walkley. He explained
(March 23, 1889):

As a matter of fact, I did go to the
Globe, not because Walkley
wished me to hear "Mr Edward
German's fine music, with its
motives after Wagner's plan" (his
half-brother), but because a musician
only has the right to criticize
works like Shakespeare's earlier
histories and tragedies. The two
Richards, King John, and the last
act of Romeo and Juliet depend
wholly on the beauty of their
music. There is no deep signifi-
cance, no great subtlety and variety
in their numbers; but for splendour
of sound, magic of romantic
illusion, majesty of emphasis,
ardour, elation, reverberation of
haunting echoes, and every poetic
quality that can wake the heart-
string and the imaginative fire of
early manhood, they stand above
all recorded music. These things
cannot be spotted (Walkley signs
himself Spectator); they must be
heard. It is not enough to see
Richard III. (Vol I, pp 585-87).

This is one of the most splendid
shots in Shaw's long campaign of
debunking Shakespeare, and it shows
him as the greatest master of the
paradoxical omniscience since the Re-
naissance.
It is almost always a mistake to
write letters to an editor; the un-
happy Globe musician had much to
complain of in the review, including
Shaw's estimate that the orchestra
consisted of only twenty-two players.
Shaw disposed of his objections with
evident relish (March 30, 1889):

With all the gentleman's ingenuity
and exceptional opportunities of
knowing Mr German's score, he
has succeeded in convincing me of
only fifteen mistakes in an entire
column of the Star; a result which
speaks for itself. . . . If there were
really "about thirty" players in-
stead of twenty-two, where were
they? . . . True, there may have
been not only the trumpets and
the solitary trombone "right
enough" under the stage, but also a
bass clarinet in the box office,
and a horn on the roof. I can
swear only for what I saw and
heard, and I can assure Mr Ger-
man that the Bayreuth device of
an invisible orchestra is also in-
audible on the floor of the Globe.
Nevertheless may be the case upstairs.

But, I confess I do not feel
quite so concerned over the estimate
of "about thirty" made by one
who is so positive to be exact. It
suggests more than twenty-nine and
less than thirty; possibly twenty-
nine and a half (Vol I, pp 593-94).

It is clear that justice is not the
aim of such criticism, but Shaw's
facetiousness should not obscure the
passion behind the cry: "Who am I
that I should be just?"
"The fact is," Shaw wrote some
time later, "justice is not the critic's
business; and there is no more dis-
honest and ineffectual affectation
in criticism than that 'impersonal',
abstract, judicially authoritative
style." Long before the five-year
period from 1889 to 1894 when he

was to do most of his work as a
music critic, Shaw was already firm
on this point. It appears plainly in a
letter he wrote at the age of twenty-
seven to Francis Hueffer, the music
critic of the Times, defending an
article of his on music that Hueffer
hesitated to publish:

But what is it that gives the vitality to
the criticism of Berlioz and Schu-
mann, both of whom you admire? Is
it a conscious (excusable word)
calm leading to the conclusion that
there is much to be said on both
sides? . . . For my part, I believe the
public likes to see a fight, I think they
ought to be gratified when there is
battle to be done in a good cause. . . .
I grant you that it is not worthwhile to
fight, that most things, impartially
considered, are as broad as they are
long, but in this spirit it is not still less
worth while to publish a journal? and
criticism is a mere waste of time.

This would appear to suggest that,
for Shaw, the ideal critic was spoiling
for a fight, but it was rather the cou-
rage of his aggressive temperament
with a clear-headed — and here —
evaluation of how little the fight was
worth, "imperfectly considered", that
made Shaw a magnificent polemicist.
Among polemical writers, W. H.
Auden once wrote, "there are a few
who must be ranked very high by
any literary standard and first among
such I would place Hooker, Swift,
Sydney Smith and Bernard Shaw."

That is very good company, but it
was not only, or even mainly, be-
cause of his polemical bent, that
Shaw became perhaps the greatest of
all music critics. Now that all his
journalism on musical subjects (with
one important exception, but includ-
ing more than 125,000 words never
before reprinted) is collected in these
three new volumes, the greatness is
easy to measure: only B. T. A. Hoff-
mann and Berlioz come anywhere near
him, and Berlioz did not write as well.

Shaw's pre-eminence in music criti-
cism (or musical criticism, as he
called it) is only too often explained
simply by his being right where so
many others were wrong. In the in-
troduction to this new edition, the
editor, Dan H. Laurence, after Shaw's
colleague and old enemy, Ernest
Newman, who conceded that "una-
nims has proved the rightness of nine
contemporary estimates of his out of
ten". It is difficult to give a precise
meaning to this specious assessment.
Unless one holds that a work of
music has an absolute value for all
eternity, independent of historical
contingency — something that Shaw
himself would have rejected vigor-
ously — it could signify only that
Shaw was good at predicting the
opinions of the next generation, that
he backed the right horses ninety per-
cent of the time.

That is not a very interesting
achievement, nor, in fact, a startlingly
high average: most moderately in-
telligent critics do about as well,
since it is generally fairly obvious
who the important contemporary
composers are early on in their
careers. A blindness in these matters

is almost always wilful, as in Hans-
lick's well-known attacks on Wagner,
and Shaw's on Brahms: the violence
of the attacks, in both cases, is a
tacit admission of the stature of the
composers. In any case, Shaw's criti-
cisms of Parry, Stanford, Gounod
and Saint-Saëns are considerably
milder, more gentlemanly, than his
notorious assaults on the German
Romantics. Brahms was the enemy
for Shaw, although he always praised
the G minor piano quartet highly,
perhaps because he heard and liked
it early on in life, before
Brahms had been invested with an
almost mythical status: the figure
that had to be destroyed so that the
progress of dramatic music from
Mozart to Wagner could continue on
into the future. (Later, in the last
edition of *The Perfect Wagnerist*,
Shaw was to claim that "Wagner did
not begin a movement: he consum-

ing to the now mode in which the
tailor measures you round the
chest, in order to get the correct
width for the knee. I am rather an
outsider in these matters, as it is
my practice to make a suit of
clothes last me six years. The re-
sult is that my clothes acquire indi-
viduality, and become character-
istic of me. The sleeves and legs
cease to be mere tailor-made
tubes; they take human shape with
knees and elbows recognizably
mine. When my friends catch sight
of one of my suits hanging on a
nail, they pull out their penknives
and rush forward, exclaiming
"Good Heavens! he has done it at
last."

However, the musical critic
presently prevailed over the
clothes philosopher; and I lifted
my gaze to Mr King's face as the
piano began the six-eight rhythm
of the Romance. In my intense
horror, he instantly beat time hori-
zontally with his eyes for a whole
bar. Unbearable memories
crowded upon me. I held on to the
back of my seat in a silent struggle
with homicidal mania. It was a
terrible moment; for my place was
within a few yards of Mr King's
throat.

I quote this at length in order to
make it evident that such passages
serve to assert Shaw's personal au-
thority as a critic, and succeed trium-
phantly. The buffoonery of the ar-
ticle three days later (May 21), en-
titled "Bizet Italianized", was even
greater:

To lovers of poetry the pearl fisher
is known as one who "hold his
breath, and went all naked to the
hungry shark." To the patrons of
the Opera he is now familiar as an
expensively got-up Oriental, with
an elaborate diadem conducted in
temples not unlike Persian news-
paper kiosks, the precincts where-
of are laid out, regardless of ex-
pense, in the manner of a Brussels
pot garden. . . . He keeps the hun-
gry shark in order by the prayers
of a virgin priestess, who remains
veiled and secluded from all hu-
man intercourse on a rocky prom-
ontory during the oyster season.

The last sentence, one of the finest
in all of Shaw's works, depends on
the rhythm of the successive clauses
to achieve its culminating bathos.
There is a controlled acceleration,
and the syllable rhythm goes:
9,9,8,7,8,7. "During the oyster sea-
son" may bring one up short, but it
has been neatly prepared. Shaw him-
self attributed his mastery of style
both to his experience of public
speaking and to a study of Mozart.

The symmetrical balance of asym-
metrical elements was derived from
Mozart.
Praise of his style irritated Shaw:
he wrote somewhere that it made
him feel like a man who shouted
"Fire!" to people who responded by
saying "How admirably isocetic!"
Shaw's supremacy as a music critic
may have depended on his ability to
write better nonsense than any of his
contemporaries except Oscar Wilde,
but it would be unfair to the profes-
sion and to Shaw to claim that that
was the whole story. One might say
that Shaw understood as almost no
one else before or after the function
of musical journalism.

How much attention is paid to
music criticism? A review of a con-
cert is read by three groups of peo-
ple, and I list them in a diminishing
order of intensity of concern: first
the performers and their agents, who
are looking for anything favourable
enough to be quoted in publicity
releases; then the members of the
public present the night before, who
wish to have their impressions con-
firmed and to be assured that they
have been at an important event; in
last place come those music-lovers
who were not there, and who want
to decide whether or not they should
buy a ticket at the next opportunity.
For none of these groups is the
accuracy of reporting the centre of
interest performers and agents want
praise, not justice; the public, both



Shaw's nonsense was indispensable
to his music criticism: it enabled him
to avoid pedantry and yet to slip in
unperceived that minimum of tech-
nical information necessary to talking
about music. The nonsense was
perhaps at its most impressive during
one week of May 1889 in two ar-
ticles, the first is called "A Typical
Concert".

. . . I remember a tenor who used
to mark time by shooting his ears
up and down. If you have ever
seen a circus clown twitch his ear
you know how it makes your flesh
creep. Imagine the sensation of
looking at a man with his ears
pulsating 116 times per minute in a
quick movement from one of Ver-
di's operas. That man permanently
injured my nervous system by re-
hearing in my presence. (Unsus-
pectingly) the arduous part of Rux in
"Il Trovatore". But he was
seduced by a rival who marked
time with his eyes. You know the
fancy clock in which an old rust
with a pistol looks out of a rustic
window, glancing from side to side
for burglars as the clock ticks.
That was how he did it; and never
shall I forget the shuddering of my
whole nature from his horrible
ocular oscillations. Feeling that I
should go mad if I ever saw such a
thing again, I left the country (he
was not an Englishman), and have
never revisited it.

Time, the great healer, eventu-
ally effaced his detested image
from my memory. But on Wednes-
day afternoon I happened to be at
Mr Henry Phillips's concert at St
James's Hall, contemplating Sir
Frederick King, who was singing
O du mein holder Abendstern. To
confess the truth, I was not mind-
ing the song so much as Mr King's
fashionable trousers, made accord-

The Fireside (Le Coin du Feu)

The deluging rain streams along roofs and gutters;
The elm by the road sways and creaks and totters
At the will of the swirling wind as it takes the shock
From the glacier's height the running avalanche falls;
The torrent bays and the gorge's walls,
Mud-brown and churning huge lumps of rock.

It's freezing! What a din the relentless hail!
Makes with its ricochets as it whips the frail
Panel The north wind tries itself in despair.
What matter! Haven't I a hearth bright with flames,
A cat on my knees that invents its own games,
A book for awake, and for sleep an armchair!

Théophile Gautier

Translated by James Michie



"Two Great Germans" - Nietzsche and Schopenhauer as portrayed by one of the leading contemporary German exponents of the art of caricature, Loriot. These portraits appear in the most recent issue of the journal *Tintenfass* (No. 4, 1981, 257-22004 9), quarterly miscellany of literature, comment and art published by Diogenes Verlag, Zürich. They accompany a collection of aphorisms and "timely sayings" culled from the work of the two philosophers, including the following on solipsism: "Not to be able to laugh on your own is a sure indication of an exceptionally weak imagination" (Schopenhauer), and on literary criticism: "It is dreadful to see great men admired by Pharisees" (Nietzsche). Loriot, alias Vico von Barlow, who takes his pseudonym from the bird on his family crest (he is a bird of prey), was born in 1923 and lives in Bayreuth. Diogenes Verlag has brought out several collections of his drawings. Other artists represented in this issue of *Tintenfass* are Paul Florio, Sait Steinhilber, Tomi Ungerer and Gustave Doré; authors include Hugo Dittmer, Friedrich Dürrenmatt, Philip Roth and Theodor Lessing.

those who were there and those who might come another time, want above all an assessment of the prestige of the occasion and of the performers - and they also want incidentally to be entertained and amused by the critic.

Accuracy of reporting does no harm, and is no doubt even a good thing, but it matters less than one might think. A critic with a tin ear but with a detailed knowledge of the reputation and the status of the performers he is reviewing is both more informative and less misleading than a critic who can hear and report correctly what went on but knows nothing about performance and composition or about the significance of the event. I do not know how accurate Shaw was: anyone who tried to determine that now would be like the art historian who claimed an exactness of resemblance for Domenico Ghirlandajo's portraits. It is obvious, in any case, that we do not still read Shaw's music criticism today because his ear was accurate. His articles remain alive because he had an acute understanding of the nature of the event he was covering, as well as the international reputation of the performers and the music. He grasped the character and the influence of most of the innovations in both composition and styles of performance that appeared during his years of writing for the *Ster* and the *World*.

Journalistic criticism is essential to the economy of music. Public concerts take place in order to permit musicians to make a living at what they love best. The fact that the public wants to hear music is really a secondary matter. The public, in fact, has to be persuaded to go to concerts - that is why criticism exists. I do not think that this point is generally understood, but it has been implied in a talk by Peter Pastreich, executive director of the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra.

Orchestras were not brought into existence to furnish music to a public; they were created by musicians (including conductors) so that those musicians could make music. Boards of directors and managements were brought into the picture in order to make it possible for the musicians to earn a living from the making of music. The public is the fortunate beneficiary of all this effort.

The critic informs the public of musical activity; ideally, he communicates professional opinion to a lay audience. The greatest critic communicates advanced and enlightened professional opinion to the public. The fact that the system functions badly now of the time should be no cause for surprise. Shaw himself was not happy with it. As he said:

I must beg my readers not to blame me if the progress of the race makes it more and more apparent that the middle class musical critic is the most ridiculous of human institutions.

A journalist critic who does not express an idiosyncratically personal point of view is dull and unreadable nevertheless, since music criticism is necessary to the community of musicians, purely personal opinions are trivial, however eccentric and amusing. In spite of popular legend, music critics do not make or break reputations; they register them. When E. T. A. Hoffmann wrote his magnificent articles on Beethoven in 1811, Beethoven was already considered the greatest living composer by an elite that ranged from Charles Burney in England and Ludwig Tieck in Berlin to less famous musicians and writers all over Europe; Hoffmann made the opinion available to the public.

Critics have more power over performers than over composers, but performers sometimes survive universally bad notices; on the other hand, they may often disappear permanently after a series of reviews. The careers of performers are made directly by agents, managers, and conductors, and indirectly through the respect in which they are held by fellow-musicians.

Neither critic nor public has more than a minor voice in deciding what music will be played; musicians, in spite of all the pressures to which they are sensitive, play what they like to a great extent. Schoenberg, to take the most notorious example, has never been very popular with either the public or with most critics, but he will continue to be performed as long as someone wants to play his music.

In Shaw's long fight for the music of Wagner, a battle which was at the heart of his activity as a music critic, his was not a lone voice crying in the wilderness - although he of times gave the impression. He was, on the contrary, riding the crest of a wave, as he himself knew; Wagner's popularity was growing in England all the time. "No other music than his," Shaw wrote on May 26, 1887, "can be depended on to draw large audiences to orchestral concerts; this was probably a slight exaggeration, an attempt to win the battle by pretending that it was already won. Shaw's goal was the production of Wagner's operas. When he wrote, *Tristan* had already been produced in Paris and New York but never in London, and *The Ring* had been mounted in London only by an imported German cast and orchestra.

One of Shaw's advantages as a critic, as he himself claimed, was his understanding of the financial operation of the business of music. In

1894, in an article for the *Scottish Musical Monthly*, entitled "How to Become a Musical Critic," he wrote:

I was enormously helped as a critic by my economical studies and my political practice, which gave me an invaluable comprehension of the commercial conditions to which art is subject. It is an important part of a critic's business to negotiate for musical reforms; and unless he knows what the reforms will cost, and whether they are worth that cost, and who will have to pay the bill, and a dozen other concrete matters not usually included in theories of criticism, he will not make any effective impression on the people with whom the initiative rests - indeed he will not know who they are.

This practical knowledge gave most of Shaw's paradoxes their force, as he observed the comic deflation of artistic ideals within the grubby, badly ventilated world of real concerts and operas.

Shaw made himself the spokesman for an important body of professional musical opinion at war with the management of Covent Garden and with the entrenched academic interests of the conservatories. His eventual victory was a foregone conclusion. The style of his criticism was personal and inimitable, but the ideas were representative and consequently authoritative. His taste was always for innovation; he championed Wagner as unquestionably the greatest of composers, and he was a champion of the Impressionists, of Debussy and of the French school. Shaw was by nature an avant-garde critic, the equivalent of the Impressionist painter, and he was enabled him to see immediately that Mascagni was second-rate, just as Thord could pick out Renoir and Monet as the most interesting young painters as early as the Salon of 1892.

There probably looked at Monet and Renoir only because Monet told him to. An art historian once remarked to me, "That was Thord's genius: no other critic listened to Monet. I do not know to whom Shaw listened; probably the members of the Wagner Society. While he had all the right avant-garde ideas about German music, he was slightly out of touch with the French. Indeed, his only references to Debussy are so idiotic that it gave Ernest Newman the chance in their famous controversy to say, correctly, that 'the amateur is well served over Mr Shaw's latest remarks'."

The controversy with Newman is perhaps Shaw's most exemplary piece of musical criticism; who else could have written so magnificently about a performance to which he was not present, and so accurately, and so amusingly the review of a fellow

critic who knew at least as much about music as he did and who had actually been there? Nothing demonstrates better the fundamental impersonality of Shaw's music criticism.

Newman reviewed the British premiere of Richard Strauss's *Elektra*, conducted by Thomas Beecham on February 19, 1910, and he wrote in the *Nation*:

All but the Strauss fauists will admit that, though he is undoubtedly the greatest living musician, there is a strong strain of foolishness and ugliness in him. Not do we need to wait for poetry to tell us that much of the music is as abominably ugly as it is noisy. Here a good deal of the talk about complexity is wide of the mark. The real term for it is incoherence, discontinuity of thinking. "The three angles of a triangle are equal to two right angles" sounds absurdly simple, but really represents a good deal of complex cerebral working; so does the G minor fugue of Beethoven.

But "the man in the moon is the daughter of Aunt Martha's tom-cat," though it sounds very complex, is incoherent nonsense; and so is a good deal of *Elektra*.

Shaw had largely abandoned music criticism for more than a dozen years, but his letter to the *Nation* (March 12, 1910) has the rhetorical force developed by years of public speaking in Hyde Park, the technique of being able to work himself up into a passion on almost any subject.

Sir - May I, as an old critic of music, and as a member of the public who has not yet heard *Elektra*, make an appeal to Mr Ernest Newman to give us something about that work, a little less ridiculous and idiotic than his article in your last issue? I am sorry to use [such] disparaging and apparently unkind epithets as "idiotic" and "idiot," but what else am I to call an article which informs us, first, that Strauss does not know the difference between music and "abominable ugliness and noise"; and second, that he is the greatest living musician of the greatest school of music the world has produced?

Newman has no right to say that *Elektra* is absolutely and objectively ugly, because it is not ugly to Strauss and his admirers. He has no right to say that it is incoherent nonsense, because such a statement implies that Strauss is mad, and that Hoffmannist and Mr Beecham, with the artists who are executing the music, and the managers who are producing it, are insulting the public by offering them the antics of a lunatic as serious art. He has no right to imply that he knows more about Strauss's business technique than Strauss himself.

Newman rejoined valiantly by pointing to Shaw's attacks on Shakespeare, remarkable for an outburst of provocative tone which made Newman's criticism of *Elektra* look relatively mild. "Unless my memory is greatly at fault," he wrote, "Shakespeare an idiot," Newman wrote, and this inspired Shaw to retort with the most important statement of critical method he ever set down:

These restrictions are no hardship to him; for nobody wants him to say any of these things: they are not criticism; they are not good manners or good sense; and they take up the space that is available in the *Nation* for criticism proper, and criticism proper can be as severe as the critic likes to make it. There is no reason why Mr Newman should not say with all possible emphasis - if he is unlucky enough to be able to say truly - that Strauss's music is disagreeable and cacophonous; that he is unable to follow its harmonic syntax; that the composer's neuroticisms worry him; and that, for his taste, there is too much restless detail, and that the music is over-scored (too many notes, as the Emperor said to Mozart).

This lazy tendency which has disgraced English journalism in the forms of anti-Wagnerism, anti-Ibsenism, and, long before that, anti-Handelism (now remembered only by Fielding's contemptuous reference to it in *Tom Jones*); this infuriated attempt of writers of modest local standing to talk de haut en bas to men of European reputation, and to dismiss them as intrusive muskies, is an intolerable thing, so exploded thing, a foolish thing, a parochial boorish thing, a thing that should be dropped by all good critics and discouraged by all good editors as bad form, bad manners, bad sense, bad journalism, bad politics, and bad religion.

"I can stand almost anything from Mr Newman except his posing as Strauss's governor," Shaw added. The violence of this rhetoric was intended to provoke Newman, as it did, but the critical principle behind Shaw's attack is irrefragable. The review is irrelevant to the purpose of music criticism. Newman's article, above all because of its tone, was gratuitous. It was essential for the health of London musical life in 1910 for Strauss's new works to be given a sympathetic hearing. Many years before (in 1894), Shaw had stated that the way composers of European reputation were treated "penitently" as intrusive and ignorant pretenses of academic music criticism in the professional reviews.

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Now for Mr Newman's final plea, with its implicit compliment to myself which I quite appreciate. That plea is that he did to Strauss only as I did to Shakespeare. Proud as I am to be Mr Newman's exemplar, the cases are not alike. If the day should ever dawn in England on a Strauss made into an idol; on an outrageous attribution to him of omniscience and infallibility; on a universal respect for his reputation accompanied by an ignorance of his work so gross that the most grotesque mutilations and emendations of his scores will pass without protest as faithful performances of them; on essays written to show how Clytemnestra was redeemed by her sweet womanly love for Egisthus, and Elektra a model of filial piety to all middle-class daughters; on a generation of young musicians taught that they must copy all Strauss's progressions and rhythms and lead him in the new collection. It is to be found in Shaw's answer to Max Nordau, a German doctor who had written a book called *Degeneration*, claiming that all modern artists, including Wagner, Ibsen, Tolstoy, Rossetti and the Impressionists, were pathologically sick. Shaw's long reply, written in 1895 for an American anarchist paper, was called "A Degenerate's View of Nordau"; it was republished in 1908 with the less amusing title *The Sanity of Art*, and for the edition Shaw added a long footnote to explain why a new composer of the "first order," Strauss, was being attacked.

Shaw could see the frequent banality of Strauss's melodies as well as Newman, but he expressed it more gracefully, wittily and profoundly when he wrote that "Strauss lives on the verge of a barcarole and seldom resists a nursery tune for long." He ascribed most of the resistance to

at pretentious dufferdom is a public duty; scoffing at an advancing torchbearer is a deadly sin.

The editors of the *Nation* put in his two cents worth by adding in a postscript that Mr Shaw appeared to think he could distinguish "duffers" from "torchbearers." He could, indeed, and what is interesting is that Newman largely agreed with him. They both knew how the sheep were to be separated from the goats. What was at issue was the politics of criticism, not the correctness of the evaluation.

Shaw was not uncritical about Strauss, but he did not write about him *de haut en bas* as Newman did. Shaw's only previous treatment of Strauss was perhaps the most brilliant page he ever wrote on music: it is unfortunately not included in the new collection. It is to be found in Shaw's answer to Max Nordau, a German doctor who had written a book called *Degeneration*, claiming that all modern artists, including Wagner, Ibsen, Tolstoy, Rossetti and the Impressionists, were pathologically sick. Shaw's long reply, written in 1895 for an American anarchist paper, was called "A Degenerate's View of Nordau"; it was republished in 1908 with the less amusing title *The Sanity of Art*, and for the edition Shaw added a long footnote to explain why a new composer of the "first order," Strauss, was being attacked.

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Lyrical interlude

By Martin Cooper

T. J. WALSH:
Second Empire Opera
The Théâtre Lyrique, Paris, 1851-1870
384pp. John Calder/New York:
Riverrun Press, £15.
0 7145 3659 8

This is the first volume of a projected History of Opera in twenty-six volumes, and it reveals very clearly the inherent anomalies of the subject. In one sense opera resembles a pair of Siamese twins, one of which - though not always the same one - repeatedly grows out of all proportion to its indissolubly linked partner. But it also resembles some mythological monster, a mermaid or a centaur, in that there is an essential contradiction between its component parts. Would a hypothetical student of mermaids need to be an ichthyologist or an anthropologist? And who, even among the specialists, would you have asked to select your prize centaur, Stubbs or Velasquez?

As though this contradiction were not enough, opera is also Protean, changing its shape two or three times a century and from one place to another. Very different qualities are therefore needed in historians of opera, according to the period concerned. The greatest opera is overwhelmingly musical in interest; but there are periods and places to which the overriding concern with the theatrical spectacle - and indeed with the essential theatricality which has led some grave critics to dismiss the whole of opera as "high camp" - drastically reduces the importance and thus gravely affects the quality of the music.

France during the Second Empire constitutes one of these periods, and it is significant that T. J. Walsh has repeated the method which proved so successful in his survey of the Monte Carlo Opera after a comparative period, and has written the history of a particular theatre as being elements in French opera during the period. This is, in fact, an admirably researched and very readable volume of theatrical history and it is really of secondary importance that the

theatre concerned was what the French call *lyrique*, or associated with music. The author himself enters into no musical discussions, makes no value judgments and stakes only modest claims for any of the views he advances about the performance at the Théâtre Lyrique.

If the general reader knows that they include Gounod's *Faust* and *Mireille* and Bizet's *Les Pêcheurs de Perle* he knows the musical heart of the story. If he also remembers that the general run of the operas produced in this theatre were among those which made Berlioz so embittered, however scrupulous a music critic, he will be still more in the picture; and to give him a sample of the level of the prevailing musical taste, let him consider the programme which celebrated one of the many "re-openings" to the stormy history of this house, on October 30, 1862. First came a "Hymne à la Musique," specially composed by Gounod, and this was followed by a "Marche religieuse" by Adolphe Adam (composer of *Opéra*). But the centerpiece of the evening was a performance of the Bach-Gounod "Ave Maria" by a sextet of admired solo singers accompanied by four violins (one of them played by Sarasate), three harps, two pianos, two organs (one played by Delibes) and the whole orchestra. It is hard indeed to imagine a sophisticated audience, as Parisian audiences certainly were, to whom this would not have presented a supremely ludicrous spectacle - "high camp," perhaps? - quite apart from its musical ineptness.

Dr Walsh has rightly insisted on the good work done by the Théâtre Lyrique in reviving neglected masterpieces and on the bonhomie attempt, however disastrous to fact, to perform Berlioz's *Les Troyens* at Carthage. Mozart, Gluck, Beethoven and Weber were all given at the Théâtre Lyrique, and in 1866 *The Magic Flute*, Don Giovanni, *Figaro*, *Fidelio* and *Oberon* were staged as well as *Traviata*, *Rigoletto*, *Faust* and *Mireille*. The list bears comparison with that of most modern opera-houses, in fact.

In a succession of directors Léon Carvalho stands out as the leading spirit, with the assistance (often in

Stress to his continuous use of unresolved dissonance and concluded that the disagreeable effect which an unaccustomed discord produces on people who cannot divine its resolution is to be found in most of the nonsense now written about Strauss. Strauss's technical procedure involves a profusion of such shocks. But the disagreeable effect will not last. There is no longer a single discord used by Wagner of which the resolution is not already as much a platitude as the resolution of the simple sevenths of Mozart and Meyerbeer. Strauss not only goes from discord to discord, leaving the implied resolutions to be inferred by people who never heard them before, but actually makes a feature of unresolved discords, just as Wagner made a feature of unprepared ones. Men who were reconciled quite late in life to compositions beginning with dominant chords, *Jeux d'opéra*, find themselves disoriented only by compositions ending with unresolved tonic sevenths.

I think this phase of protest will soon pass. I think so because I find myself able to follow Strauss's harmonic procedure; to divine the destination of his most discordant passing phrases (it is too late now to talk of mere "passing notes"); and to tolerate his most offhand omissions of final chords, with enjoyment, though my musical endowment is none of the acutest. In twenty years the complaints about his music will be as unintelligible as the similar complaints about Handel, Mozart, Beethoven, and Wagner is the past.

Shaw's remark about "passing phrases" in Strauss is astonishingly

acute: it is a beautiful way to characterize the essential innovation of Strauss's music, in which not merely a chord can be dissonant, but whole phrases are conceived as unresolved in relation to the basic harmony. Shaw finishes by apologizing with unbecoming modesty for the old-fashioned "technical jargon" he used; he must have realized it was radically up to date. It was rare for Shaw to use any technical expressions in his criticism.

Debussy, in middle life, said about himself as a young man that he was "Wagnerian to the point of forgetting the elementary principles of civility". Shaw was like that, too, but when he went to Bayreuth, he wrote a series of devastating articles on the bad singing, the unimaginative production and general stodge of the management. Some of these articles, reprinted for the first time in this new collection, appeared in the *Pall Mall Budget* during August, 1894. Towards the opening of the first of these, Shaw made a bold-faced apology for his humour:

Like Kundry in Parsifal, I am the victim of an impulse to laugh at inappropriate moments. In the enchanted garden scene of that work, when the piccolo gives a derisive shriek, and the lady points, by a descent of a diminished double octave from B natural above the stave to a C sharp below it, the enormity of her confession, "Ich leuchte" ("I leached"), I always feel inclined to say "Don't take on about it, *gnidid*, *Fräulein*: so have it, often, as equally unsuitable crises." In fact, I am worse than Kundry, for I never feel the slightest remorse for my misconduct. If misconduct it be to laugh at Wagner to Bayreuth and to uphold him everywhere else.

Shaw's remark about "passing phrases" in Strauss is astonishingly

the French rather than the English sense) of his wife, the singer Marie Miolan-Carvalho, who created the roles of Marguerite and Mireille. She was later to be described by Reynaldo Hahn as possessing "a talent which was indeed miraculous, with ineffable bad taste, an immense arrogance concealed under bourgeois affect, and an implacable will, to which he had lent the support of his effective directorial powers".

The involvement of the public, and indeed of the political society, is admirably documented throughout, and it may come as a surprise to find not only the then late Queen Elizabeth but Prince Poldowski among the composers performed. The contemporary press is quoted at length and in great detail, often no more than frivolously "amusing" but sometimes shrewd, though never well informed musically, or indeed interested primarily in the music. This is in fact a very fair and intelligent portrait of an operatic era in which opera was almost as much a social as a theatrical phenomenon and purely musical merit was in fact less important than the other very small point - originality in the French term for what we call laryngitis or pharyngitis and which was complained of it were not suffering from angina pectoris.

In *The Sign in Music and Literature* (237pp. University of Texas Press, 0 292 77563 6) Wendy Steiner has assembled papers on literature, music and ballet delivered at the International Conference on the Semiotics of Art held in May, 1978, at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. In Towards a Semiotics of Music, Henry Orlov argues that musical semiotics should proceed only from music as performed, and a position contested by Allan Kozlov, "Two Views of Musical Semiotics," which stresses the relation between language and music. Other essays include John Blacking on "The Problem of 'Ethnic' Perceptions in the Semiotics of Music," David Lidov on "Technique and Signification" in the Twelve-Tone Method, and Alan M. Perlman and Daniel Greenblatt on "Miles Davis Meets Noam Chomsky: Some Observations on Jazz Improvisation and Language Structure".

Margaret Kennedy (1896-1967), English novelist, playwright and essayist: correspondence, manuscript, reminiscences, photographs, etc. sought for a critical biography and possible collected edition of her fiction. Margaret Keith, 65 Melville Street, Apt 2, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M4X 1R9.

Shirley Parr Trull (1902-99) and Susan Moodie (1893-85), Canadian writers: daughters of Thomas Strickland of Raydon Hall, Suffolk, and sisters of Agnes Strickland: letters to English friends and publishers, prior to and following their emigration to Canada in 1832, sought for publication. Sherree-Lee Powney, Lady Eaton College, Trent University, Peterborough, Ontario, Canada, K9J 7B8.

Writings by Children: letters, diaries, stories etc. written between 1820 and 1835, published or unpublished, sought for inclusion in a book. Susan Lasdon, 25 Dawson Place, London W2.

Information, please

Circulating libraries and library societies. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries: any information concerning surviving accession lists, subscription ledgers or registers of borrowing for a social history of the British novel, 1780-1830. Peter Orsidge, Institute for Advanced Studies in the Humanities, 17 Buccleuch Place, Edinburgh EH2 9LN.

Count Ervin Bathory (1877-1934), Hungarian anarchist: any information about his life, and the circumstances of his death in Britain; also whereabouts of letters, diaries, etc. for a biography. F. T. Zappan, Department of Modern History, St Salvator's College, St Andrews, Fife.

Tadamasa Hayashi (1853-1906), pioneer of ukiyoe in Europe and resident of Paris (1878-1905): information sought about his activities to England. A. Hayashi, 2-27-3 Kamitanihachi, Kanagawa-ku, Yokohama, Japan.

Margaret Kennedy (1896-1967), English novelist, playwright and essayist: correspondence, manuscript, reminiscences, photographs, etc. sought for a critical biography and possible collected edition of her fiction. Margaret Keith, 65 Melville Street, Apt 2, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M4X 1R9.

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Here is perhaps the secret of Shaw's superiority: he laughed at Wagner at Bayreuth and upheld him everywhere else. That was the true principle of *avant-garde* criticism while the *avant-garde* still existed.

It remains only to emphasize that Shaw knew a great deal about music - much more than he let on and perhaps a little less than he thought he did (to paraphrase Oliver Strunk about a well-known American composer). His mother supported the family by singing and teaching music, and from childhood music was always an important part of Shaw's life. He taught himself to play the piano, beginning ambitiously with Mozart's *Don Giovanni*. He ended up with the most exhaustive understanding of opera, Italian as well as German. He knew when a few bars had been cut, a passage altered or a number transposed. His knowledge of the instrumental repertoire was less extensive, but still remarkable. He could complain only half-heartedly of being "asked to listen to the intellectualities, profundities, theatrical fits and starts, and wayward caprices of self-conscious genius which make up those features of the middle period Beethovenism of which we all have to speak so very seriously when I much prefer these beautiful, simple, straightforward, unpretentious, perfectly intelligible posthumous quartets". (But this, of course, was a good *avant-garde* position, not far from Wagner's.) Given the force of Shaw's critical principles and the sanity of his approach to journalism, it was perhaps not absolutely necessary for him to know a lot about music to be a great "middle-class musical critic". We must be grateful for how much he did know, and for the few years he gave to that "most ridiculous of all human institutions".

Jean Anthelme Brillat-Savarin (1755-1826), gastronome and judge: letters and documents sought for a biography. Herbert Cahoon, 29 East 36th Street, New York, NY 10016.

Robert Garloch (R. G. Sutherland): letters sought for possible inclusion in a planned book of Garloch's prose. Robin Fulton, Postbox 467, N 4001 Stavanger, Norway.

Wilfred Israel: personal recollections sought of his period of war work in Britain; for a biography. Naomi Shepherd, c/o Abso, 85 Hordford Road, London NW11.

F. O. Matthiessen (1902-50): information concerning his death and the last years of his life; for a biographical essay. H. Weber, Universität Hannover, Seminar für Englische Philologie, Im Moore 21, 3000 Hannover 1, German Federal Republic.

Isaac Newton (1642-1727): information concerning letters or any manuscript materials not previously available to scholars, especially those sold by Sotheby's to 1936. Gale E. Christianson, Department of History, Indiana State University, Terre Haute, Indiana 47809.

Nineteenth-Century Scottish Publishers: information on the location of catalogues, archive material, etc. relating to the following: Obphant, Anderson & Ferrier (and the various partnerships which preceded it); Wigh & Innes; Johnston, Hyatt & Co; Edmondstone & Douglas; MacNiven & Wallace. John Dempster, Westgate, Motherwell Street, Airdrie, Lanarkshire ML6 7BI.

Writings by Children: letters, diaries, stories etc. written between 1820 and 1835, published or unpublished, sought for inclusion in a book. Susan Lasdon, 25 Dawson Place, London W2.

less of at our decades". The 1930s may have accelerated ribbon development and multiplied unlovely council estates; but they were not responsible for motorways and multi-storey car-parks. The real vandalism belongs to the Fifties, a decade on the course of which the once beautiful town of Colchester was torn apart. As for the beautiful gardens of Sissinghurst Castle, the joint work of Harold Nicolson and Vita Sackville-West, there is a certain wryness in the comment: "... he designing and she planting in a supremely happy partnership". Naturally, I was deeply gratified to see my birthplace, Princeson-on-Sea, rightly described as "a select seaside resort". Long may it remain so.

The authors do not miss much. Here is the old, familiar fly on the window of Buckbury church, here are the pathetic graffiti, in dog Latin, on the subject of the Black Death, inside the tower of the beautiful church of Ashwell. Here are the Culpepers, lined up in diminishing size, boys on the left, girls on the right, in the parish church of Goudhurst. Here is Lady Ormiston, in stone, and Sir John Kyrle, in wood, in the church of Much Marcle. Here, in the churchyard of Moreton Corbet, adjoining the ruined manor-house, is the bronze sculpture in memory of thirteen-year-old Vincent Corbet, who died at Eton in 1904, perhaps the last of his line. The contributors, no doubt counselled by Ronald Blythe, who has written a superb introduction to the section on East Anglia - It is perhaps easier to write

well about the most beautiful part of England; how difficult it would be to write well about the dreary, dark and sinister villages of the Cotswolds - have even found their way to the little church of Copford, though they do not mention the skin, under glass, of a blaspheming Dane, presented to the church by one of my eighteenth-century ancestors, Nathaniel Cobb.

The *Guide*, despite a few notable omissions, is nearly always good on churches, especially those in unlikely places, down footpaths, through farmyards, adjoining ruined palaces, even if it means the motorist actually having to walk twenty or thirty yards (unfortunately he does not have to walk more than a few steps to reach the once-lovely Trout Inn at Wolvercote, there is a huge car-park just opposite). Tombs and tablets are minutely recorded, as well as pews, pulpits, fonts, roofs; local building materials are pointed out; the size of churches is related to population; and, where appropriate, in East Anglia or the West Country, the fortified churches of the Scottish and Welsh Marches are listed. There is even a section, rather incongruously in a *Guide* to England, on Cornish towns, ports, churches and villages.

Of the introductory essays, my favourite is the one devoted to folkies, grottoes, along with resident hermits, false ruins, and topiary, by the late Barbara Jones. We encounter the happy resident hermit of Tong. But, she adds, "there are many records of early failure - the

hermit went away, or he was found drinking in the village and dismissed". The hermit boom belongs to the eighteenth century; but there was a brief revival in the 1920s, especially among former officers who had served on the Western Front. In and around Tunbridge Wells, in the mid-Twenties, there were still five fixed hermits: one, a killed Scot (who had nothing on under his kilts), camped on the Common; schoolboys were warned against him, but he was quite harmless. Another, before 1914 a keen cricketer, lived in a tent near the Hawkenbury Corner (no ground now occupied by the Ministry of Pensions); he still maintained the rather bedraggled uniform of his pre-war enthusiasms, wearing a very old pair of white trousers that were going green and grey, rotting tennis shoes, and an unidentifiable blazer, and he carried his spartan shopping from the store in Hawkenbury in an old cricket-bag designed for pads. He picked up himself, rather loudly, about pre-war county matches. There was a third living in an elaborate wooden structure, in the woods between Tunbridge Wells and Speldhurst. A fourth actually lived in a cave, conforming to eighteenth-century requirements, in the Happy Valley, beyond Rushall church. During the same period, there were two permanent hermits on Box Meadow, north of Oxford. The hermit's life, like chicken-farming, seems to have provided one of the refuges for the human wreckage caused by the First World War. I am sure there were many more hermits, living in deep

woodland, or on commons on the fringes of towns, throughout the 1920s. Perhaps a social historian might be induced to map out this sad jettison of the Western Front. A last word on topiary is provided at the end of Barbara Jones's essay: "... there is a more recent one in Wolverhampton that has privet topiary of 16 Scotch terriers, two cats and a rat". So folkies are not just a Gallic speciality, and the former Chival seems to have had many English artisanal counterparts.

All the authors complain, rightly, about the idiosyncrasies and horrors of the oow county boundaries, none more than Peter Fleetwood-Hesketh, who has had to cope with the inanities of the North-West. But even the *Guide* has some bizarre groupings: Essex, in East Anglia; yes, at a pinch, one would like to be an East Anglian. The South-East presents no problems. But why should Dorset be put in the South, when, surely, it would be happier with the West. But the real trouble starts with a jumble called the North Midlands that puts poor Shropshire in the strange company of Lincs, Leics, Notts, Derbyshire. What do Salop and Lincs have in common? Or is it merely a roster of how far up ooe is? In another unhappy jumble, Bucks becomes separated from its natural twin, Oxon, ending up in the company of Beds, Herts, and Northants. Herts certainly is a problem, rather like Surrey; it is a vague area through which one passes, on the happy journey east (in England, happiness comes in the exact reverse to the mood of Russian travellers as described by

Custine in *Un voyage en Russie en 1849*, after a conversation with an East Prussian publisher on the border: "When they are travelling west, they are happy and gay, when they are travelling east, they are gloomy and uncommunicative") on the Oxford-to-Cambridge bus: Litchfield, Hitchin, Letchworth. Where do they belong? By Royston, however, the landscape improves, it is already home territory. Of course, all groupings must be fairly arbitrary. Both Romney Marsh and Otmoor would seem to be more at home in the Fens; and the lovely Clun country hovers mysteriously between Shropshire, Herefordshire, and Wales. Avon, Humberside, and the Cotswolds, as well as being consulting both to the historical past and to the unfortunate inhabitants who have to live in such places. We have been almost as silly as the French: Seine-Inférieure, Loire-Inférieure, Charente-Inférieure, Basses-Alpes, Basses-Pyrénées, all have had to go. At least in this country, as there is nothing very high, there is no disgrace in being rather low. Having no aspiring mountains, we make do very well with hills. One of the authors proposes, as the most beautiful hill in England, Brecon. I would opt for Caer Caradoc, in the Strettons. It is all a matter of taste.

Even if aimed primarily at motorists, that is to say at people who will make our countryside and our towns even worse than they are already, this is still a very serviceable guide. It may even induce people to walk, to ride, or to cycle. Which is very noble of Shell.

POLITICAL HISTORY

PAUL HOLLANDER:

Political Pilgrims
Travels of Western Intellectuals to the Soviet Union, China, and Cuba 1928-1978
524pp. Oxford University Press. £15. 0 19 302937 2

In our time politics has increasingly become the pursuit of religion by other means. The key to the twentieth century - not least to its horrors - is to study what happens in practice when this transformation takes place. Paul Hollander, in this illuminating survey of intellectual pilgrimages to such shrines as Stalin's Russia, Mao's China, Castro's Cuba and Ho's Vietnam, assumes that the intellectuals who mainly composed them were the heirs to the early agnostics. I rather doubt that. Intellectuals, especially those who think of themselves as such, are usually born to believe, gregarious and, within their group, highly conformist. What they believe will be what it is socially permissible to believe, at any one time, in the congregation to which they belong. At *Les Temps Modernes* Jean Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir, for instance, ran an authoritarian mixed monastery, and when a monk stepped out of line, as Albert Camus did, the ferocity with which he was assailed had all the characteristics of odium theologicum. The credulity of a group of intellectuals, especially on pilgrimage, is far greater than that of one on his or her own - a reason why totalitarian states prefer to lump them into parties. And the fact that intellectuals agree - even wish - to travel in this degrading manner indicates an initial prejudice in favour of deception.

The truth is, pilgrims, religious or secular, demand prodigies. Hollander quotes Jonathan Miskin, a pilgrim to China in 1972, writing in 1979, after he had fled: "Throughout our trip we have seen the critical faculties which had been directed at our own government, and... bumbly helped to insert the rings in our own noses." A

Through pink-coloured spectacles

By Paul Johnson

Chinese guide admitted the same year: "We wanted to deceive you. But you wanted to be deceived." If there is no God, and no Heaven to come, the need for some kind of millennium on earth does not diminish; on the contrary, as Norman Cohn put it: "A world purified of all evil and in which history is to find its consummation - these ancient imaginings are with us still." Intellectuals tend to be better at deceiving themselves than most people; they have the imagination for making that "willing suspension of disbelief" which the perception of Utopia, like poetry, requires. And, as Saul Bellow put it, "A great deal of intelligence can be invested in ignorance when the need for illusion is deep."

The first great age of political pilgrimage was the early 1930s, at a time when Stalin's forced collectivization of the peasants was killing five million of them and hustling ten million more into the camps. As Hollander shows, the pilgrims had no difficulty in ignoring or justifying all that. One of Stalin's "achievements" was the White Sea Canal, built by 300,000 slave-labourers, and later harrowingly described by Solzhenitsyn. Amabel Williams-Ellis, in an introduction to a book on the project published in 1934, enthused: "This feat of accomplishment of a ticklish engineering job, in the middle of primeval forests, by tens of thousands of enemies of the state, helped - or should it be guarded? - by only 37 OGPU officers, is one of the most exciting stories that has ever appeared in print." Of the same project the Webbs wrote: "It is pleasant to think that the warmest appreciation was officially expressed of the success of the OGPU, not merely in reforming a great engineering feat, but in achieving a triumph of human regeneration." "The labor camps" wrote Anna Louise Strong, "have won a high reputation throughout the Soviet Union as places where tens of thousands of men have been reclaimed." "So well known and effective is the Soviet method of remaking human beings," she added, "that criminals occasionally now apply to be admitted." Harold Laski praised Soviet prisons for enabling convicts to live "a full and self-respecting life". Whereas in Britain, said Shaw, a man entered prison a human being and emerged a criminal type. In Russia he entered "as a criminal type and would come out an ordinary man but for the difficulty of inducing him to come out at all. As far as I could make out they could stay as long as they liked."

A touch of cynicism in the last sentence? One is never sure with Shaw. He knew about the murders. His fellow-pilgrim, Lady Astor, chided Stalin: "How long are you going to go on killing people?" But when he replied as long as necessary, he changed the subject and asked him to find a Russian nanny for her children. Defending Stalin, Shaw argued: "We cannot afford to give ourselves moral airs when our most enterprising neighbour... humbly and judiciously liquidates a handful of exploiters and speculators to make the world safe for honest men." He thought Stalin had "delivered the goods" and "took off my hat accordingly". H. G. Wells said he had "never met a man more candid, fair and honest... no one is afraid of him and everybody trusts him". The Webbs insisted he had less power than an American president, merely acting on the orders of the Central Committee and the Presidium. Hewlett Johnson found him "a man of kindly gentility" who was leading "his people down new and unfamiliar avenues of democracy". J. D. Bernal paid tribute to his "deeply scientific approach to all problems" and his "capacity for feeling". "A good natured man of principle," said the Chilean writer Pablo Neruda. "A man to whose care I would readily confide the education of my children", pronounced the biographer Emil Ludwig. "His brown eye is exceedingly wise and gentle," reported the American ambassador Joseph Davies. "A child would like to sit on his lap and a dog would side up to him."

Hollander, who has collected many

such gems, shows that the unmasking of Stalin even by his former colleagues did not persuade the intellectuals of the 1930s, who flocked to Havana and Peking, to be a little more cautious. Hewlett Johnson popped up again to find in Mao's face "something no picture had ever caught, an inexpressible look of kindness and sympathy". He had, Han Suyin wrote, "an ever-present concern for the practical application of democracy". Striking an unusually open religious note, Orville Schell wrote that the Chinese had absorbed the thoughts of the Chairman until "the word almost literally became flesh" and he had "almost become transubstantiated in his people". Norman Mailer thought Castro "the first and greatest hero to appear in the world since the Second War". It was "as if the ghost of Cortez had appeared in our century riding Zapata's white horse". Sartre, too, found Castro a "superman who could do without meals or sleep: 'Of all these night-watchmen, Castro is the most awake. Of all these fasting people, Castro can eat the most and fast the longest. [They] exercise a veritable dictatorship over their own needs... they roll back the limits of the possible.' When Castro stands erect, wrote Abbie Hoffman, "He is like a mighty penis coming to life, and when he is tall and straight the crowd immediately is transformed."

The ability to accept miracles, the willingness to justify persecution, the appetite for hagiography, are religious attributes. "He who is not with us is against us," wrote St Paul, to be echoed by Eldridge Cleaver in a menacing note to his fellow intellectuals: "If you are not a part of the solution you are a part of the problem." Isaiah Berlin has noted that the quest for Utopia is a search for wholeness, "the conviction that all the positive values in which men have believed must, in the end, be compatible, or perhaps even entail one another". It is striking how often the word "whole-

ness" is used by political pilgrims to describe the societies they found in Russia, China, Cuba and Vietnam. Susan Sontag rejoiced that "the Vietnamese are 'whole' human beings, not 'split' as we are". She found the same about spontaneity, gaiety, sensuality and freaking out. They are not linear, dedicated creatures of print-culture.

As with religion, what the eye "sees" reflects the inner faith, rather than the actual object perceived. Sometimes the coming of the new vision is almost a physical event, as it was with St Paul at Damascus. Hollander quotes Anna Louise Strong: "The Communist Manifesto hit me like a bolt of lightning... Like an expert surgeon, this document cut away cataracts from my eyes." Afterwards, things look different, and that's why a pilgrimage is a voyage of marvellous discoveries, where familiar objects acquire a new significance. Eugene Lyons wrote of Russia in 1928: "Elsewhere, diagnosis might be depressing. Here it seemed to us romantically proletarian." "Exhaustion, vermin, dysentery were birth-pangs to joy," said Anna Louise Strong. Contemplating a perfectly ordinary Russian train, Waldo Frank found "There is something about a Russian train standing at a station that thrills... The little locomotive is human." A Brooklyn lady, taken round a Moscow printing-works, complained that such marvellous machinery did not exist in America, only to find that it had been made in Brooklyn. Hewlett Johnson rejoiced at China's "new codes of honour", citing the fact that newsstands were unattended, purchasers dropping their money in boxes - something he could have seen all over London.

There is an element of almost conscious self-deception in this double vision. Simone de Beauvoir argued that it was morally acceptable for pedicabs to be found in socialist China: since the task performed was useful to

Remembered residencies

By E. S. Turner

CAROLINE DAKERS:

The Blue Plaque Guide in London
318pp. Macmillan. £7.95.
0 353 28462 3

It was William Ewart, the MP responsible for persuading Parliament to abolish hanging in chains and to introduce free public libraries, who first proposed commemorating the houses of the famous in London. In response the Royal Society of Arts began putting up chocolate-coloured plaques, of which a few survive. A generation later the Earl of Rosebery, first chairman of the London County Council, urged that the task be taken over by that body (now the GLC). Suitably, the homes of both men are marked by plaques.

The chocolate shade has long given way to the familiar blue. There is, however, a good many unofficial, or "rogue" plaques, though rogue seems a hard word for tributes put up by such blue-faced bodies as the South London Theatre Club (remembering Browning), the London Hellenic Society (Cavafy), La Société d'Etudes Stettiennes (Madame de Staël), and the Czechoslovakia Colony (Masaryk).

Caroline Dakers lists both official and rogue plaques in her welcome and authoritative guide, a work embellished by fifty full-page elegant line drawings by herself. As a record of what a man, or woman, must do to achieve this sort of immortality, it will inspire the same mixture of pleasure, wonder and bafflement that people derive from studying the Houses of Lords.

Among the GLC requirements for a blue plaque are that a person should be regarded as prominent in his sphere by a majority of members of his calling; that he should have made some important positive contribution to human welfare or happiness; that his name should be known to the well-informed passer-by; that his work should "deserve recognition"; and that he should have been dead for twenty years or have passed his hundredth birthday.

Evidently not all these requirements are enforced. The members of the GLC Historical Buildings Advisory Committee, who select the plaques, themselves whether Sir Isaac Newton, inventor of the machine-gun, had been buried in a positive sense to

human welfare and happiness; how the debate went we shall never know. Perhaps it was enough that Maxim was esteemed by members of his profession and that, scientifically speaking, he deserved recognition.

We are on tricky ground here. On a red-brick house in Ealing is another GLC plaque to Alan Bower Blumlein, electronics engineer and wartime cryptanalyst, who transformed Bomber Command's attacks on German industry (he was killed in a Halifax bomber in 1942). If we welcome his invention in war we must honour him in peace; otherwise, we have no right to honour generals or admirals.

What about the contributions to human welfare and happiness by Marx and Lenin? We are told that the first two plaques to Marx, in the 1930s, were smashed, though the present one on a restaurant in Dean Street, Soho, seems reasonably safe. A proposed Lenin plaque was refused by the owner of a house which had become a village, but Lenin has a privately erected plaque on a hotel in King's Cross Road, commemorating his days at Percy Circus, now no more.

Perhaps the services of a lady of pleasure are entitled to recognition? There is a plaque in South Street, Mayfair, to "Sklair", described as "the last Victorian courtesan", but this book does not tell us who erected it (inspection suggests it to be blue and circular but to lack the GLC imprint). One could argue that the lady's contribution to human welfare and happiness was probably exceeded by the welfare and happiness bestowed on her by her many patrons, notably "Harry" and "Duke" of Devonshire. Did any committee go into these aspects? Every such body has its moralists, and there may be there were those who objected to the blue plaque for Donald McGill, demurely described as a "postcard cartoonist".

The passer-by would need to be exceptionally well-informed to be able to place some of the 600-odd residences listed in these pages. Names like Ruy Barbosa, Dobson Obradovich, and Charles Edmund Pezzoni, little known to most, are listed with those of Voltaire, Metternich, Talleyrand, Freud and Gandhi. In all but a couple of such cases the compiler gives us useful, sometimes striking, amplifying information. Oddly, that the "last" nothing to tell us about Krishna Menon.

The requirement that a resident should be twenty years deceased is not over-strictly observed. Joseph Chamberlain won his plaque the year after his death and Lord Morrison after twelve years (the GLC looks after its own). E. M. Forster, who died in 1970, is down for a GLC plaque in Turnham Green "c. 1981", but it is not yet in place. The tablet commemorating the architect of the Kennington Road was put up by the Vauxhall Society. Lord Brockway is possibly unique in having a plaque on one of his homes while still living (one excepts Lord Gnome in Greek Street); he was honoured by the Borough of Islington, which makes its own rules.

Most plaques stick to the bare facts, which seems sensible, but there are exceptions. Bernard Shaw's tablet in Fitzroy Square proclaims: "From the coffers of his genius he enriched the world." Edgar Wallace's former blue plaque in Tresseltan Crescent avoids the sentimental grandiose of the privately erected plaque in Ludgate Circus (who were the kings he walked with?). De Gaulle's wartime headquarters in Carlton Gardens bears a private plaque which quotes from his great rallying call to Frenchmen; and it is that the French text reproduced here contains several errors.

De Gaulle is a reminder that the suburbs of London have their claims to memorials too. There is a house (not mentioned in this book) which was a Gaullist nest in Battersea, in 1940. Did he, one wonders, travel up to London to the Southern Electric, with all those communists and Marxists? Churchill is told that plaques are "sprinkled on the most unimpressive semis in suburbia", but there is clearly room for many more. "Sitton, Redbridge, Merton, Hounslow, Bellingham, Brent and Bexley" are blue-plaque each; Barking, Bafford, Havering, Hillingdon, Kingston, Newham and Waltham Forest have none.

From the introductions we learn that a GLC councillor once proposed to honour a Ukrainian who lived in London in Belgium who was probably killed by a man, but the music-hall artist Arthur Lucan, famous for his rumbustious "Gold Mother Riley". Despite accusations of carrying favour with the masses, quite a string of old-time variety stars have now received their plaques. In due course there will be

objections to remembering pop stars (Tommy Steele's mansion on that busy corner in Ham is just made for a blue plaque). Still to the popular field, the GLC honoured Bram Stoker, creator of Count Dracula, but Mary Shelley, creator of Frankenstein, posed a problem; the clerical occupants of her one-time home in Chester Square objected to mention of the monster, and the Council withdrew, leaving the field to the Keats-Shelley Memorial Association. As with the Lenin plaque, it is a reminder that the feelings of occupants have to be considered. Some householders object to tablets of any description, not wishing to have people gapping up at their dwellings.

Should mothers of the famous be honoured? The GLC seems ready to leave such recognition to others. Susanna Annesley, mother of John Wesley, earns a sign from the City of London at Spitalyard, Bishopsgate. In the Vale of Health, Hampstead, a plaque is dedicated to the Hampstead Plaque Fund, as the bore of Alfred and Geraldine Harcourt, parents of that sumptuous brood, Lord Northcliffe, Lord Rothschild, Lord Harmsworth, Sir Leicester and Sir Hildebrand Harmsworth.

Some illustrious residences have more than one plaque. Dr Johnson, Colindale, Thomas Hood, and George Orwell have three; Keats, Turner and Disraeli four; Charles Lamb five and Dickens seven. Among the most distinguished addresses, as one would expect, are Chayne Walk, Bedford Square and the Vale of Health. No 10 St James's Square achieves some sort of record through having housed three Prime Ministers: Chatham, Derby and Gladstone.

Notoriously the presence of a blue plaque is no obstacle to the demolition of a house; rather is it seen by developers as a challenge. In central London there is an ever-growing number of plaques reading "In a house on this site... Unless the well-informed passer-by can see the original edifice, much of the fun goes out of the spotting game."

The notes furnished by Caroline Dakers offer a useful stimulus to the imagination. Frequently she quotes from a contemporary description of the interior of a house. So, we can picture Cardinal Manning in the littered gloom of 22 Carlisle Place, in a low armchair, his faded red skullcap cocked over one eyebrow, and the only object of pety his favourite malachite candelabrum. Or we can look at

16 Chayne Walk and try to picture Meredith shying away from the sight of Rossetti's uneaten breakfast, "the eggs which had bled slowly to death on slabs of coagulate bacon". Or, better still, we can stand outside "The Pines", on Putney Hill, thinking of Swinburne sliding down the banisters, "an act followed by the exquisite pleasure of waiting for the removal of the splinters" (his usual vagaries of phrasing - *winners are sometimes lightly touched upon*).

The book is a treasure-box of odd characters and odd institutions. In Camden Square lived the founder of the British Rainfall Association, George James Symons, who kept an unbroken record of the weather in his home for forty-two years and built up a network of over 3,000 rain-watchers. In Hertford Street, Mayfair, lived Sir George Cayley, a pioneer of aviation who "in 1832 or 1833 built the first successful manned carrying glider, which he carried his coachman in the air for a short distance". Sir Jonathan Hutchinson, surgeon, schoolist and teacher, of Cavendish Square, was "reported to have seen over a million cases of syphilis".

It could be argued that too many minor painters have been commemorated. Their ranks include Richard Dadd, who rounded off his father and was one of Broadmoor's first inmates; and Alfred Stevens, who after making fortunes for dealers in Florence, graduated to constructing exhibits for the Great Exhibition of 1851 - and designed the Wellington Memorial in St Paul's.

If some lesser achievers earn posthumous honour, at least nobody gets a plaque by virtue of having borne a title or owned enormous wealth. In the spirit of noblesse oblige the Dukes of Bedford, who built Bloomsbury, and the Dukes of Devonshire, who built Belgrave, are much of Mayfair, at one time erected plaques to their more bourgeois residents, but on their own behalf seem to have been honoured (the index refers to an entry for a Duke of Westminster on page 229, but he seems to have given up the title and publisher the slip). A case could be made out for recognising the Duke of Sutherland who built what is now Lancaster House, the acorn of "Summills". It seems unlikely that he shall ever see a blue plaque in Buckingham Palace.

In a palace on this site lived John Shettfield, Duke of Buckingham and Normanby; Diogenes; Rochester and Re-Writer of Shakespeare.

Night: or, What You Will

(For printing the following piece some reason should be given, as not one word of it is original. . . . This practice, in which the author sometimes indulges, of linking together, in his own mind, favourite passages from different authors, seems in itself unobjectionable but as the publishing such compilations might lead to confusion in literature, he should deem himself inexcusable in giving this specimen, were it not from a hope that it might open to others a harmless source of private gratification.)

Now sleeps the crimson petal; now the white
In summer's twilight weeps itself away.
Now fades the glimmering landscape on the sight -
Fields where soft sheep from cages pull the hay,
Greece cowering, and the moonlight-coloured May,
A formless grey confusion covers all.
Along the wide canals the zephyrs play:
The woods decay, the woods decay and fall.

Tho' west confuses. The high stars grow bright
Far as the solar-walk, or Milky-way.
What glowing hues of mingled shade and light!
In mo' thou seest the twilight of such day,
The hills and rocks attend; my doleful lay
In this sad night is piercing like the squall.
My pip is lost; my shepherd's holiday.
The woods decay, the woods decay and fall.

O, blame me not, if I no more can writ
Earth shakes her nodding towers, the ground gives way.
For all that moveth doth in Change delight.
Imperious Caesar, dead and turned to clay,
Keeps his pale court in beauty and decay,
Like Nelson, Harold, Hector, Cyrus, Saul,
And when Fate summons, monarchs must obey.
The woods decay, the woods decay and fall.

As in those domes where Caesars once bore sway,
See the fierce Volsungs on Spain and Gaul,
Assyria, Greece, Rome, Carthage - what are they?
The woods decay, the woods decay and fall.

(NOTE: I have considered the punctuation as wholly in my power.)

Philip Drew

A key to the source of the lines of this poem will be found on p. 1496 of this issue.

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Memories of the primeval chirp

By Russell Davies

DENNIS POTTER:
Pennies from Heaven
196pp. Quinlet. £6.50.
0 7043 3200 1

The sight of another "novelization" of a television series does not uplift the heart, and those forbidding words "Now a major film from M.G.M." simply pile dread on melancholia. The odds, clearly, were always against Dennis Potter, and this book duly transforms one of his successes into a defeat. It is a great shame. In its original form, *Pennies from Heaven* was called "a personal triumph" for Potter, and that was truer than the cliché allows. Many of us have watched Potter's work — in the last decade at least — with an eye for the drama beneath the drama: the slight of a sensitive man doing battle with a terrible disillusionment which will never quite submit to the process of being spread among the dramatical personae. One feels always for Potter as an individual, for be-

tween hope and raging despair there does not seem to exist, for him, the intervening net of cynicism which breaks the fall for most of us. When political faith collapsed and religion rushed in with a damagingly clumsy first-aid, the dramatist was left to fight off nihilism more or less from memory. With memories, indeed. His "nostalgia" puts the word to shame; it is the most strenuous form of spiritual yearning, by which Potter urges us back to an Edenic state which, his intellect recognizes, was never really there. He has acknowledged, for example, that childhood innocence, the Eden of the poets, was always surrounded by the same world of exploitation and betrayal and selling (Potter is a fundamentalist in his disgust with commerce) that we see around us now.

But *Pennies from Heaven* found a device — trivial, slight, but vital — to get round all this. The cheap little tunes on its soundtrack, punctuating the action (by stopping it) and filling the head of the music-salacious "hero" Arthur, were perceived to be in some fragmentary way immune from moral decay. It was hard to argue that they really were immune:

what could be more damning, after all, than the fact that you could sell them across a counter? But there was something — some primeval chirp in those silly old refrains, that kept hope alive. Some unreachable optimism, and even goodness, was kept going in the grooves of the old shellac. You saw it to people's faces within Potter's play, and his present-day audience responded commensurately. Every song embodied a declaration of faith by the beleaguered playwright, and if it was nothing more than "I sing, therefore I am" — a barely verbalized equivalent of whistling in the dark — then so be it.

A novel performs most cost this device aside. The page is not alive to the sound of music. The primitive sense of release — sob into song — which the television drama offered cannot be provided, by third-person narrative. Besides, the very sound of the music filled out the character of Arthur in his role as a song-sheet vendor. It explained things about him, it accounted for the soul we were supposed to sense within the shell of bluff in the novelized version, for all that tunes may still run through Arthur's head, he might as

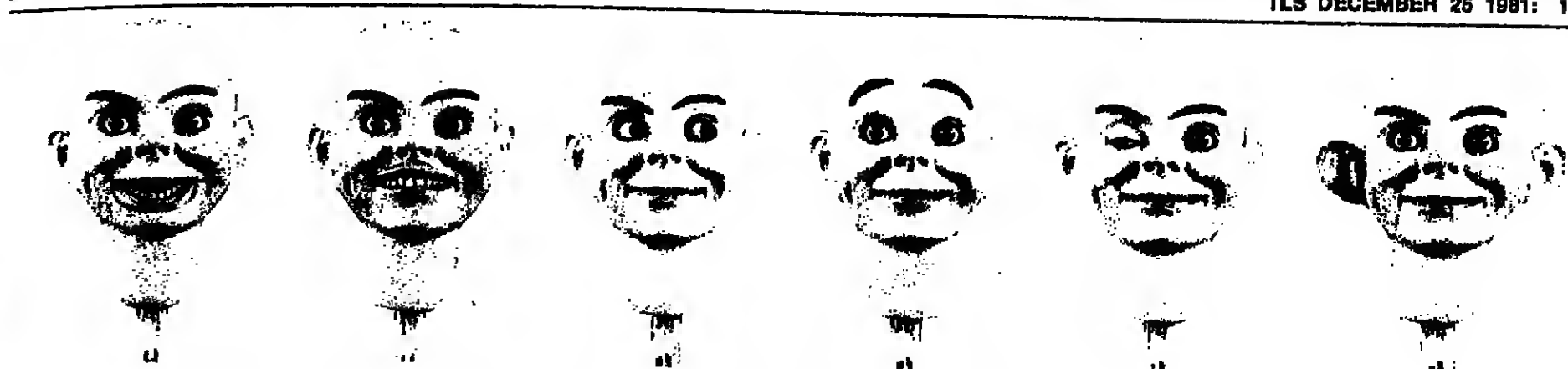
well be selling soap. The scene, moreover, has been transported away from the leafy lanes of England to the chill of Illinois (presumably for the benefit and comfort of the major film-makers at M.G.M.). Potter is ill at ease here, his dialogue uncharacteristically turbid with untended colours. "You're a — what they call it? A fatalist, right?" he said, touched by awe. "That's the only word that's left, lover, she smiled..." Exchanges like this merely remind one that Potter faced the task of concocting American speech. Under the Hollywood tags, there's an earnest English heart-to-heart in progress, and you can hear his distracting echoes all the time. "That's all right, honey," he responded, with evident relief. "I've got enough movie for both us!" Sadly, he doesn't have it at all.

Potter is not a natural prose narrator, not in a faded America anyway. Partly it's because an element of stage-direction survives in the wooden wording ("Arthur began to shift about again, both in actual physical movements and in his mind..."), especially when description is called for. "An early juk was

quivering its own brand of music" is a line written from the television scene-setter's point of view: it makes a hole in the atmosphere and involvement drains away. More serious again — though I think this might not have happened if Potter hadn't felt obliged to lay on the verbal vigour for the American audience — is his habit of trying to jazz up exhausted forms of words. "It was already too late. His goose was cooked, and basted with aizzling hot fat" is not better but worse than the original bare cliché.

At least two false endings prolong what is by now an agony. Nothing in the book has helped persuade us that "Arthur, after his fashion, and despite flawed as he was by his own compromises and evasions, nevertheless retained... some memory of the Garden of Eden." But viewers who saw Bob Hoskins's portrayal on the screen will remember that there once was an Arthur of whom this could be said. It's getting to the stage where we're dealing in memories of memories of memories; but something of the kind will have to suffice if we are to rescue a fragment of uncompromised hope from this recycled matter.

SCIENCE



Devastating the dissemblers

By J. M. Ziman

MARTIN GARDNER:
Science, Good, Bad and Bogus
415pp. Buffalo, NY: Prometheus
Books. \$18.95.
0 87985 144 4

Does anyone around here remember Uri Geller? About five years ago his antics were all the intellectual rage. He appeared on television in Britain and America, demonstrating an uncanny ability to bend keys without apparently touching them. The august scientific journal *Nature* published a solemn account of experiments testing his powers of extra-sensory perception. Several well-established academic physicists were convinced that these powers were "psychic", and defended this view in a televised debate against the American "magician" James Randi. Having been criticized for publicly losing my cool against all that rubbish in that debate, I got a certain amount of quiet satisfaction from the fact that Mr Geller's conjuring tricks have been pretty thoroughly exposed, and that the most competent of his scientific advocates has publicly withdrawn his support. So although I would myself begrudge spending much time and effort on unmasking such patent frauds, I am thoroughly with Martin Gardner in treating them with the derision they deserve.

Mr Gardner is known to millions for his inventive, amusing and learned mathematical column in *Scientific American*, and for many other articles and books about science for the general public. The present work is a sequel to his *Fads and Fallacies in the Name of Science*, which ought to have put a stop to most pseudo-scientific absurdities when it appeared some twenty-five years ago. But as he himself ruefully admits, irrationalism flourishes as never before, and seems never to be defeated by rational argument. Each of these reviews of ridiculous books, which originally appeared, over the years, in various journals, is as downright and factually devastating as one could imagine, often arousing speedily into responses which he also reports and comments upon with sarcastic relish. And yet, to almost every case, his 1989 postscript reports that each pseudo-scientific cult still goes on, or has been replaced by one that is just as bad.

His hard-headed, commonsense style, based upon H. L. Mencken's advice "One horse-lough is worth ten thousand syllables" is probably the best tactic. In most cases, indeed, the facts themselves — gross inconsistencies of arguments, glaring loopholes in the test-procedures, shufflings and evasions — are quite persuasive enough without further mockery. Gardner has a short way with dissemblers, but does his homework thoroughly on such details as the various careers of Uri Geller (a professional conman); their religious and political beliefs (a number of scientific investigators of parapsychology are adherents of Scientology or the precise circumstances of the supposedly paranormal events of the conditions of J. B. Rhine's most famous case of "extrasensory perception" did not guard against a trivial form of cheating). As he points out, much of this careful research that

getting negative results is glossed over or ignored for its apparent dullness. Although, by its very nature, as an unedited collection of book reviews, this book is somewhat repetitious, it is immensely valuable as a source of reliable information on all sorts of queer fish and queer notions.

It would be easy to fill the rest of this review with comical or tragic examples of human folly or fraud drawn from this source — but that would be a little stale at second, or third-hand. One should, if possible, read Gardner's reviews in their original setting, savouring the accuracy of his aim and looking forward to the next issue of the journal, where their living target is sure to make a bigger fool of himself by trying to reply. This is a prime blood sport, in which the satisfaction of the spectators is entirely justifiable.

Nevertheless, though every shot goes home, it fails to kill. There is something very puzzling about this whole business of pseudo-science. Although I entirely approve of Gardner's objectives and methods in almost every detail, I am surprised to find that I do not perfectly sympathize with his attitude in general, nor precisely accept his opinion on what is really at issue. It is all so confused and extravagant, on a more distant and wider shore of the mind than I am normally accustomed to visit.

It is impossible, for example, that metal objects can be bent or broken without the application of mechanical force, or that an isolated person can correctly determine the suit of a card being drawn at random in another room, or that living fairies should present themselves to be photographed by two young girls, or that flying saucers loaded with little green men, keep arriving on Earth from the planets of distant stars, or that an uneducated Brazilian peasant could diagnose and cure the diseases of thousands of genuine sufferers. Whether such events are utterly banal like spoon-bending, or utterly fantastic, like the landing of immense flying saucers, they cannot be reconciled with any of the world maps by which we usually navigate through life.

It is impossible, moreover, that there are "psi forces" that transmit information instantaneously from mind to mind over large distances, or that the subtle paradoxes of quantum mechanics are relevant to such matters, or that there can be contact with the minds of the dead (this particular doctrine is getting a bit out

of date) or that the movements of the planets have any discernible effect on human history. However crude or subtle they may be, these explanations of the inexplicable are also totally incredible.

It is impossible, on the other hand, that intelligent, well-educated people, apparently in full possession of their senses, occupying posts of responsibility in education or science, could be utterly mistaken, or completely fooled, or temporarily blinded to such an extent that their reports of such events are entirely without foundation. Indeed, whether the observer is a trendily imaginative professor of theoretical physics, like John Taylor, or a tough-minded academic bureaucrat like Anatoly Alexandrov, the Rector of Leningrad University and now the President of the Soviet Academy of Sciences, it would be incredible if their testimony were completely false.

It is impossible, nevertheless, that any sane person contemplating such events should not think of the devices by means of which "magicians" contrive to "see through blindfolds" by peeking down their noses, or manipulate objects while distracting the attention of their audience by irrelevant actions, or affect compass needles or bridge-counters with small magnets or radioactive sources hidden in their palms or their toe-cloths, or "read thoughts" by listening for subtle cues in questioning, or pick up messages from hidden sources via their accomplices. It is incredible that there can be people — so apparently ignorant of methods of deception, yet so convinced of their personal ability to detect fraud — that they will watch a conjurer vanish an elephant on a brightly lit stage, and readily admit they cannot explain how he did it. Next day they will watch an ex-magician move an empty pill bottle three inches and instantly declare that no conjuring techniques could possibly have been used.

Like any sane, sensible, well-informed person, Martin Gardner yearns for a world in which all these incredible things would be truly impossible. So, I guess, do I. But the real world is not like that — and as life-long disciples of the Red Queen, we have sadly learnt to believe as many as six such impossibilities before breakfast, and then gone on fearlessly to lunch and dinner. That is to say, we accept the fact of the illogicality of human beliefs and behaviour, however much we may deplore it and attempt to combat it. Such is the fate and the duty of the responsible intellectual.

But that is not really the difficulty. It is the whole complex of interrelated "impossibilities" that makes the *problem* of pseudo-science so intractable. How can one think clearly about the relationship between actions and ideas all of which one personally finds incredible? How can one understand the behaviour of people with whom one has no empathic comprehension on matters that they find compelling? There is a barmy barrier that baffles the most enlightened — philosophical, sociological or sociological analysis.

The only thing I can suggest is that one should start a little further inside oneself. There, after all, is where we feel at home, and have adequate personal experience of how it really works. Instead of seeking for elements of scientific rationality in the para-scientific margins, we might recall that even the best of high science has its intellectual and personal pathologies which are only a little less fantastic and exaggerated than those of pseudo-science.

Gardner tries to make a clear distinction between the case of the professional scientist obsessed with an eccentric theory and that of the complete ignoramus asserting unscientific scientific doctrines. In this distinction really tenable at the psychological level. The professional scientist who goes a bit dotty has two clear advantages over the layman: he has ready access to the formal media of scientific communication, and commands

These photographs of the various, complicated movements of the Insull "cheeky boy" ventriloquist head are included in I Can See Your Lips Moving: The History and Art of Ventriloquism, (174pp. Kaye and Ward. £12.50. 0 7182 587 3), a fascinating illustrated account of the subject by a skilled practitioner of "belly speaking", the appropriately named Ventriloquist Vox. Ventriloquism has its origins in ancient divinity and mystic rites; condemned by the Church in the Middle Ages because of its use by "witches" it has never quite lost its association, however comic, with the occult. A notable, music-loving coalman, Thomas Britten, died of shock in 1714 after a ventriloquist conjured up the voice of God. The enormous success of Gogo Bergen with Charlie McCarthy, and Peter Brough with Archie Andrews in the visually limited medium of the radio denotes a continuance even in this century of blind faith in the appreciation of ventriloquism.

It is impossible, in sum, in this day and age, that such irrational doctrines as those of astrology, biblical fundamentalism, Scientology, trans-cendental meditation, faith healing, etc. could be taken seriously by thousands — even millions — of people, including sublimely talented scientists and frighteningly responsible statesmen. Whether based upon ancient religious revelation or modern scientific quackery, such doctrines are all quite incredible to an open rational intellect.

It is not so easy, after all, to decide where unorthodoxy shades into irrationality, especially in a very abstruse or ill-explored field of research. I would be interested to see how Gardner would deal with Linus Pauling's theory of the therapeutic value of Vitamin C, which might possibly prove quite as disastrous for some pathetic cancer patient as any other quack remedy. Or he might give his opinion on the story of "polywater", which cost millions in research grant money, before it was shown to be an experimental artifact, even though it was obviously completely "absurd" within the most elementary framework of thermodynamics. Such episodes, on a smaller or larger scale, are characteristic of the scientific life, and they often bring to the surface all those human weaknesses of self-deception, gullibility, doctrinal blindness, and even deliberate fraud, of which he is so scornful outside the scientific profession.

That is why I felt a little uneasy about his summary treatment of the current controversy about the linguistic capabilities of apes. It may be, indeed, that this is just another example of very subtle unconscious clues, as in the famous case of Clever Hans, the "talking horse". But I had the impression that this was a serious scientific debate which still remains open. There is another narrow line between the brave defence of good sense and the dogmatic assertion of accepted opinion. Mr Gardner knows this as well as anyone, and he is right to scoff at the argument that, because Lavolter did not believe that meteorites came out of the sky, we should all be careful not to dismiss any unorthodox opinion just to case it might later prove to be correct. I am all for expressing an honest view on any controversial matter, so as to be quite clear where I stand for or against — but only on the understanding that I take of special pride in being right and do not regard it as an eternal black mark against me if it eventually turns out that I was quite wrong. A touch of that sort of humility seems in order.

Keeping it brutal

By Patricia Craig

GEOFFREY O'BRIEN:
Hardballed America
The Lurid Years of Paperback
144pp. Van Nostrand Reinhold.
£14.40.
0 442 23140 7

The cover painting for this volume is appropriately lurid and inept: it shows a frightful-looking criminal caught with his tie awry and his hands full of hundred-dollar bills, standing just behind him is a black-eyed blonde in evening dress, clutching a handgun and an automatic. The approximate date of this striking little scene is 1950, when the garish American paperback reached its zenith. The industry began, as Geoffrey O'Brien points out in his informative survey, with the titles brought out by Pocket Books (trademark a studios-looking kangaroo) in 1939.

The term "hard-boiled fiction" was originally applied to the tough detective novel which, in the hands of writers like Hammett and Chandler, gave American readers an indigenous product that owed nothing to the classic traditions of English detective writing. These authors, and the more literate of their followers, made the standard crime story of the pulp papers respectable. Private-eye fiction quickly became a staple of the paperback companies (Pocket Books was followed by Dell, Avon, Popular Library, Gold, Martin, Signet, among others), though it was taken in popularity by one of its offshoots, the hard-boiled romance. This unassuming category, which depends for its effects on a dispiriting mixture of the tawdry and the torrid ("A surging novel of temptation and sin" is a typical summing-up), flourished in an age that demanded ever-increasing sensation. You need a paradox to describe these thick accounts of lust and duplicity, and George Gralle (to his essay entitled "The Hard-Boiled Detective Novel") has provided one: "realistic melodrama". No room here for the unexceptionable or the insipid in any guise.

Hardballed America contains a good many reproductions of paperback covers (1939 to the late 1950s), and of them in colour: the picture soon becomes plain. After the decorative instructions of early Dell art-work, for example, comes a raft of pictorial illustration, which matches the novels' content in its distrust of understatement. Artists and writers share an attachment to the overblown, both depicting a world in which sexual attractiveness in fiction is equated with mammary malformation. Naturally, the cover women are forward ladies who wear as little as possible, favoured garments are

towels, bathrobes, petticoats, ball-gowns, men's shirts (c 1950), blouses open to the waist, skirts blowing in the wind. Whatever they're doing, they do it inadequately clothed. (You only see girls in outdoor coats if they're about to be done in a dark alley. "She died in terror with the killer at her heels.") A woman with a passion-racked body and a Ghost-ridden soul" is shown in her suspenders. From this type of cover illustration it is possible to learn a great deal about underwear in the underworld.

Authors like James M. Cain, Horace McCoy and David Goodis dominated the market in the 1940s and 1950s; and styles of illustration which suited the intertemporal quality of their work (all melodrama, noir and romantic doom) were employed universally, and not always appropriately. Yet the novel in question was not actually lurid, robust or wayward in the required manner (there were some). It underwent a slight metamorphosis in the mind of the paperback publisher. Take D. H. Lawrence's *The Virgin and the Gypsy* (an irresistible title for the market, never mind the content): on the Avon cover of 1952 you find a gypsy looking like a gigolo and a virgin looking like Lana Turner in a towel. Lawrence's *Goodbye to Berlin* gets a gutter-press headline for its return to city life: the pulp-writer's aim is to isolate the bizarre, the potentially fascinating, however misleadingly. Of Chandler's *The Little Sister*, for instance, we're told "straight away" "The corpse's wig held a deadly secret".

Even among the less reputable writers, titles do not always seem to be chosen with unimpeachable discretion. What, for instance, is the sedate, English, authorless Patricia Wentworth doing in the company of unrivaled crime writers like Dashiell Hammett, V. S. Pritchett and Richard Ellington ("My gun-but am I a skunk!"). Her covers can accommodate popular motifs — like the gun-holding female — blonde-haired skull and the person falling from a great height — without undue distortion. It's true, but the narrative tone is always one, and gentle — never a wisecrack in sight, and no relish at all for the sickening thump of the foot in the eyeball.

The British impulse in American fiction is seen at its naivest in the Hammer horror of Mickey Spillane, but this was by no means its only outlet. It affects detectives and criminals alike. In the latter genre, the battered investigator is a figure just as common as the battered hoodlum (sometimes the two are indistinguishable). Instead of clever, valiant detectives who find hoodlums, the novelists crusade against the hoodlums. The novelists crusade against all kinds of social abuse. By the early 1950s, popular

authors had fallen well and truly under the spell of the sordid; delinquency, juvenile gangsterism, narcotic addiction and other pungent topics received extensive treatment. Chandler's mean streets were transformed into teaming alleyways where the luckless, the corruptible and the maladjusted congregated ("They were spawned in the sidestreets of hell"). The adjective "hard-hitting" is applied so often to this type of fiction that it comes as no surprise to find an author calling himself Wallop.

The lurid paperback, according to Geoffrey O'Brien, blazes from its shelf "like a fire someone has forgotten to extinguish. It lives, and cannot be ignored." His study provides a satisfactory guide to the themes and the embellishments of popular literature, but he often veers to the temptation of taking his material too seriously. Is *Lost Ladies* really a manifestation of the emotional void at the heart of American society? Can a subversive intention really be attributed to the author of *A House of Horror*? Desire, we read, "enraged that it cannot be fulfilled... turns desperate, paranoid, violent". The author (who can blame him?), surrounded by innumerable low-key stories in gaudy covers, and feeling, perhaps, like Tony Last in the jungle as he reads Dickens to all eternity, detects a "central crack in the great design" (I think

he's referring to an American vision of the Good Society). To the central crack is added a troubling wobble, and then a nagging itch (Geoffrey O'Brien is no more given to understatement than Howard Hunt or Wendell Brown). Faced with the impending upheaval all this implies, the avid paperback reader can do nothing but turn to the prose of, say, John D. MacDonald "because its images sustain the life in him". The blurb of this study, which refers unsmilingly to "America's secret mythology" when it means the type of novel that used to be available on any railway bookstall, is this rather an inflated way to describe a genre that contains more unadulterated trash than any other.

The game of bafflement

By Ruth Dudley Edwards

AGATHA CHRISTIE, DOROTHY L. SAYERS, G. K. CHESTERTON, and others:
The Floating Admiral
By Certain Members of The Detection Club
309pp. Macmillan. £5.95.
0 333 31955 9

If G. D. H. and Margaret Cole count as one, this curiosity-cum-novel, first published in 1931, was most unnaturally conceived by thirteen members of the Detection Club. It is difficult to imagine that it could have been brought to term without Dorothy Sayers's efforts as midwife as well as contributor. She put into the project all the enthusiasm she felt for the "Club" itself, where she took the benevolent with such seriousness that (her biographer notes) younger members found her a dampener on much of his whimsy.

Her introduction to this book is certainly a mixture of solemnity and fun. There is earnest reiteration of the Club's commitment to "eschew accident and coincidence, and play the detection game in an honourable manner". That same principle underlies *The Floating Admiral*. Starting with "Canon" Victor Whitechurch, who contented himself with the discovery of a skeleton in the back of a boat drifting down the river, the author in turn added a chapter with no assistance from anything but his own wit. The chapters were rigid: each writer must not only continue the story in such a way that the whole was capable of solution but must also, and at the time of writing, compose a full solution. Dorothy Sayers resisted the difficulties of the last.

"Speaking for myself, I may say that the helpless bewilderment into which

I was plunged on receipt of Mr. Milward Kennedy's little bunch of brain-teasers was, apparently, fully equalled by the hideous sensation of bafflement which overcame Father Ronald Knox when, having, as I fondly imagined, cleared up much that was obscure, I headed the problem on to him."

This is a book of irrepressible charm for students of the detective story. Agatha Christie, faced with unfamiliar characters, nevertheless managed to introduce into her brief contribution not only new twists but also one of her own vintage types — the garrulous lady. How marvellously predictable too that Freeman Wills Croft — against all odds — should make most of his running from an examination of railway timetables. Unlike those two — who were acting true to form — Ronald Knox introduced an element of self-parody, saddling the unfortunate detective with a list of questions thrown up by the case that in the end came to Thirty-Nine Articles of Doubt.

Of course the whole was somewhat uneven. The best submission, that of Anthony Berkeley, was an exercise in glittering ingenuity, and, fifty years on, a reminder of how disgracefully undervalued he has been. A few of the others, like Edgar Jepson and Clemence Dane, were also good, but the weaker ones were left to rot deep and muddying just one area. Yet they all succeeded in carrying the story along — even the Coles, whose main gifts were certainly not in the writing of fiction. G. K. Chesterton is perhaps the exception: He had the easy job of writing the prologue after the story had been finished, and made it so delicate that it makes little sense unless read afterwards.

That the exercise produced not just a curiosity but a readable novel

has, of course, a great deal to do with the Detection Club members' pure delight in the setting and solving of puzzles. There is a lengthy appendix containing the solutions worked out by each author, in which their love for that aspect of their craft is evident. Indeed Dorothy Sayers's enthusiasm here got the better of her: it is hard to maintain interest in her theory for twenty pages. Clemence Dane is much more enduring when, after a half-hearted shot at a solution, she ends with "In any, frankly, in a complete muddle as to what has happened, and have tried to write a chapter that anybody can use to prove anything they like."

It is difficult to imagine our best detective story writers playing the same game nowadays — Michael Innes following a chapter of suburban menace from Ruth Rendell, putting a light-hearted, elaborately wrought and impenetrable gloss on the story and then handing it over to P. D. James for the bleak psychological explanation. Yet it sounds a highly engaging prospect. But where is the midwife?

Glady Mitchell in *Lovers, Make Love* (1922pp. Michael Joseph. £6.95. 0 7181 2031 0) gives us death at an amateur performance of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, when Pyramus stabs himself rather too successfully with a property dagger, which does not fold up as he hopes it will. The resulting brouhaha is cleared up, with beautiful efficiency, by the renowned Dame Beatrice Lestrangre Bradley. The large cast is occasionally confusing, and some of the child actors seem phenomenally advanced for their age, but it's unmistakably a Glady Mitchell and, as such, to be welcomed by the connoisseur.

T. B.

Short Story

As I knocked the cup from the shelf
My mind flashed up reprisal

That glass you dropped, the dark hotel room,
My ladder in the rack, your car driving away.

A masterpiece of prose.
The cup hit the floor. I turned to pick up the pieces.

Connie Bensley

The taxonomy of tin-pan alley

By Anthony Burgess

RICK ALTMAN (Editor):

Genre: The Musical
228pp. Routledge and Kegan Paul
BFI. £9.95. (paperback, £4.95)
0 7100 0816 3

In the field of the film musical (genre they say here, forbidding and, as it turns out, ominous) I can claim at least a foiled though not easily forgettable creative participation. In 1967 I was summoned to Hollywood by Warner Brothers to write the script and lyrics for a musical on the life of William Shakespeare. The producer was William Conrad, the bulky private eye of *Gunsmoke*, and the director was to be Joseph L. Mankiewicz. These were the days of the hard-ticket movie, and *The Bard* (a misleading title soon changed, on my insistence, to *Will*) was projected as a four-hour extravaganza with an all-star cast. Robert Stephens was to play the lead and Maggie Smith Mistress Hatheway. For the rest, the image of the actor was a unanimous choice only for Ben Jonson - "Peter Ustinov, because he looks like Ben Jonson." I wrote script and lyrics and, while my hand was in, also the music, which survives in a studio recording, but the film was never made. Warner Brothers changed hands and scrapped all existing projects, but *Will* still haunts the baroque splendours of Hollywood as one of the great impossible dreams. It could have worked. I dream of it regularly in my own technical. Reading this collection of highly intellectual essays on the film musical, I wonder how it would have fitted into the various sociocultural taxonomies.

While conceding that the form is primarily intended to entertain, these cinematic philosophers are concerned, overwhelmingly with a *Cohere* approach, as the titles of the essays indicate. Thus, Robin Wood gives us "Art and Ideology: Notes on *Silk Stockings*." Jim Collins "Towards Defining a Matrix of the Musical Comedy: The Place of the Spectator Within the Textual Mechanisms." Rick Altman "The American Film Musical: Paradigmatic Structure and Meditative Function." Professor Altman teaches French and Comparative Literature at the University of Iowa and is Director of the Inter-University Centre for Film Studies in Paris. He deals in the higher cinema. From the pages he edits here, only the subdued 'job' of achieved analysis within the *cadre* of political and structuralist concern suggests that there may well be pleasure to be obtained from the genre. Certainly there is no visceral rush.

Let us, with Mark Roth, look at some Warner's musicals of the 1930s and see how far they exemplify, or fail to, the spirit of the New Deal. In *42nd Street*, Warner Baxter ("... You're going to dance your feet off... It's going to be the toughest six weeks you ever lived through... Not one of you leaves the stage tonight until I get what I want") represents a traditional view of authority, charged with a Calvinistic work-ethos. Baxter gives orders but is removed from the actual techniques of production. It has to be left to James Cagney, in *Footlight Parade*, to demonstrate the new collectivist spirit. Cagney, like Baxter, plays a producer, but a producer who is also a hooper and can slap into the show when the leading man is too drunk to perform. Here, we are told, is the spirit of the New Deal, with the collectivist added to the Calvinistic. *42nd Street* ends with the weary Baxter, smiling and alone, saying "Just another show." These are the days of success and failure, boom and bust for eternity. But *Footlight Parade* ends on stage with the Busby Berkeley production number "Shanghai Lil," a huge bar fight ending in order and tranquility, drills, the American flag, even a portrait of Roosevelt. This is a better ending than the other seems not to be the point.

social significance is easier to demonstrate than the values of art.

One cannot discuss the great age of the musical without lavish references to Busby Berkeley. He was bound to come in for some hard knocks as an exploiter of female beauty in an age when the eye has become an instrument of rape, and Lucy Fischer has much to say about an exploitative philosophy summed up in Berkeley's "I love beautiful girls and I love to gather and show many beautiful girls with regular features and well-made bodies." She concentrates on the crudely titled *Dames*, which versifies the Berkeley creed in a song of Dick Powell's: Who cares if there's a plot or not, if it's got a lot of dames?

What do you go for? Go to see the show or?

Tell the truth - you go to see those beautiful dames.

It is very grim stuff. "What we see on the screen is a shut of the Berkeley harem arranged in pyramidal fashion against a complex decor. In perceptibly, the image of the actress, transmuting to that of a photographic representation. And in a parody of sexual entry, the number ends with Powell's head breaking through the image surface." In what I would take to be a harmless little sequence - Joan Blondell in "The Girl at the Ironing Board" - we are told that she is "gang-raped" by a man of laundry which slides down upon her, and that "the overwhelmingly male syndrome" of clothes fetishism (Kinsey, 1953) is imposed unusually (though "significantly") on a female persona. Nobody saw this in 1934, naturally, but, by God, we see it now.

We come now to the divine Cyd Charisse who, in *The Band Wagon*, according to Dennis Oles, represents "the mother who possesses a phallus" to the lost little boy who is Fred Astaire. He has lost his star status, but she is secure in hers. Her legs are powerful, and these "and her mastery of the show-at-hand all tend to lend her virility in the eyes of the fragile, disconsolate Astaire." Mercifully, however, she retracts her phallus. Astaire metaphorically kills the father-director of the show and Charisse's own lover and "Charisse deprives herself of her parental status by softening auto-castration." We are ready for the show to go on, for an indefinite run, meaning eroticism without end. "That's entertainment," goes the song, and love is part of it. In *Silk Stockings* Cyd Charisse is in the service net of Freud but of Marx, though Robin Wood admits that "the film's creative vitality can be reasonably reduced to its ideological contradictions." Still, there is a fair attempt at a reduction. Mr. Wood prefers *Silk Stockings* to the Garbo vehicle *Ninotchka* on which it is based because "Cyd Charisse's discovery, through dance, of her individual physical existence opposes itself to both the state-determined automatism of the film's Communism and the woman-object of its Capitalism."

The most massive piece of dissection and exegesis comes in Raymond Bellour's "Segmenting/Analysing," which takes *Gigi* (perhaps a suitable subject since it has a French setting) and splits it into segments, suppositions, and arguments in the service of a demonstration of the aim of the *soixante*, which is the resolution of an Oedipal situation. It is beautifully done, but was it worth doing? The assumption, throughout this collection, is that so filmic a structure as a film musical can bear the weight of all this analysis in depth. The makers of those delightful and brilliantly carpentered entertainments are seen, in the French manner, as the spoken and sung rather than as the speaking and singing as the instruments of archetypal and Zerfing. We are being told here to use them as indices of Freudian, Marxist, and Levi-Straussian truths. But in the process, the dancers become paralysed and the pretty little tunes are distorted.



"I think you know everybody."

The picture on the cover of Charles Addams's most recent collection of his peerless cartoons from the New Yorker, *Creature Comforts* (Unnumbered pages. Heinemann. £7.95. 0 434 00703 X) shows a typical Addams middle-aged mole figure (drawn with perhaps more than a hint of self-portraiture) standing in front of a door bedecked with locks and bolts under which has been thrust a letter bearing a large, red heart. The drawing on the title page shows the same man turning a key in one of his locks while a protruding saw cuts away the floor from around his feet. Addams's world, at once a private, bizarre individual vision, which reveals in the unexpected and the out of the ordinary, and a creation which inspires immediate and widespread curiosity and acclaim, has been delightfully comforting us in the New Yorker since 1935 with its threats to our sense of security. Changes in the real world since then have not been completely ignored by Addams. The book contains the brilliant conceit of a man taking a Polaroid snap-shot whose subject, a woman, only gradually comes into being as her image becomes defined in the photograph. But the peculiar power of Addams is such that he needs to make few concessions to changing fashions. The cartoon shown here is one to tease the cognoscenti of figurative art.

In search of lost chords

By Gerald Abraham

NIGEL LEWIS

Paperback
246pp. Hamish Hamilton. £9.95
0 241 10235 9

Before the Second World War the Preussische Staatsbibliothek held one of the finest collections of music, particularly manuscripts of the greatest masters, in the world. They included the autograph scores of Beethoven's Seventh Symphony and the three instrumental movements of No. 9, the C minor Piano Concerto, four of the last quartets, and a vast quantity of Mozart: Acts I and II of *Die Entführung*, Act II and I of *Figaro*, Act I of *Don Giovanni*, the whole of *Zauberflöte*, eleven symphonies (including the "Prague", the B flat and "Jupiter"), eight solo piano concertos, the C minor Mass, and very much else. (Nigel Lewis adds a non-existent but not major symphony by Schubert - probably the B flat, D485, which was in the Staatsbibliothek.)

In 1941, as a result of British air-raids on Berlin, the music holdings of the Staatsbibliothek were moved for safety first to Schloss Fürstentum in Silesia and then to the Benedictine abbey at Griesham. When hostilities ended, the Polish border was established on the Oder-Neisse line. Ordass became Kreszow and the Poles unenthusiastically moved the musical treasures to the Biblioteka Jagiellońska at Cracow. The Polish authorities, at first, were reluctant because they had little idea what the treasures were, and they were afraid of East German demands for the return of the treasures. "I kept remarkably quiet about it. But several of my nature are bound to look at the treasures of the Jagiellońska. I was talking to German colleagues and about 1965, when the Jagiellońska at Cologne was being set up, I was told: 'We know where the

missing Mozart scores are. They are quite safe and had better be left for the time being."

However, it was only twelve years later that the Polish Government began to come clean, and then in May 1977 Oleski, on the occasion of the ratification of a treaty of friendship between Poland and the Democratic Republic of East Berlin, a token gift: the complete *Zauberflöte*, the C minor Mass and the "Jupiter" symphony, the three movements of Beethoven's Ninth and his C minor Piano Concerto, some Bach - and some *nickis*. It was a token but not a very generous one, and there the matter rests. At least, scholars now have access to the main treasure; though if they come from the West they have to travel a little further to get it.

These are the salient facts which Mr Lewis has elaborated in his investigative, journalistic and a 246-page book. The padding is enormous. One whole chapter is devoted to an English zoologist's attempt to identify a Brazilian fish and Lewis has to tell us that

to the zoologist strict rules of scientific naming are vitally important. Natural history uses names to distinguish between different groups of the same, from the Mammals and Reptiles down to the smallest sub-species; and though nature takes no stock of family trees, the study of nature does.

Four pages are given to reconstruction of the thoughts of the director of the music section of the Biblioteka Jagiellońska before his suicide in January 1968, ingenious speculation but unsupported by any real evidence. Lewis is very innocent - Alexander von Humboldt was rather more than an "eighteenth-century explorer of South America" - and he even believes that when Mozart's clavichord was played in the birthplace at Salzburg on the bicentenary "the sound" "filled Mozart's house". It is evident that he has never heard a clavichord.

of the dramatic personae, a flamboyant busybody named Carleton Smith - on no account to be confused with the distinguished American musicologist Carleton Sprague Smith. Smith was one of the first American civilians to get into Germany at the end of the war and at once began searching for missing music. In the first place the Wagner manuscripts known to have been presented to Hitler in April 1939. There is no doubt that Smith played a very active part in the search for the lost scores, even if it was much less effective than he would have us believe. Lewis makes no secret of his doubts of Smith's veracity - and in the end they led to nothing.

The real interest of Lewis's book lies in the meticulous following of mostly false trails, the pinning down of rumours, the revelations of international bungling and skulduggery. And it rises with each appearance of Carleton Smith:

Smith was not just an experienced music critic, but a qualified accountant, with a degree from the University of Illinois behind him, business studies at other universities, and wartime experience as an adviser and "image builder" for big American corporations. He had tried his hand at selling jeans to the Soviet Union (a pair of jeans embossed gold cuff-links was sent to Stalin), working in South America for the Rubber Development Corporation, and joining in the "drive for better homes" for Celanese.

"At the age of four we find him backstage at the Chicago Opera, sitting on Mary Garden's lap." Later he had known Paderewski, Furtwängler, the Wagner family, Richard Strauss and Shubert. It was President Truman himself who sent him on his mission to find the lost treasures. (Lewis writes "that they hit it off well together. They had a lot in common.") And there is a charming anecdote of Bernard Shaw whom Smith visited when he was dying. Smith took him "a manuscript page containing a piece of melody by Mozart. 'It is like looking into sunlight', said Shaw."

The hero of the clavichord-pounding incident is the most colourful character

The Vindication of Obesity

By Tom Disch

After the setbacks of summer, the amplitude Of autumn, and winter's graspings For the last calories of vermouth and cake Cemas the season of penitence. We wear drab colors then and comb our hair Differently. We weigh ourselves On trustworthy scales whose unwavering needles Accuse us of gross excesses. No one so fat Will ever be initiate to the gnosis Of fitness nor share the normal human experience Of paradise. Our only hope, then Lies in diet and exaltation, our only happiness Those tasteful icons everywhere advertising The pleasures of fully resurrected flesh.

Within the hobbling, semi-solid fat we feel The incipient musculature, the ridges Of the unseen ribcage, the wistful lungs. The heart, so trusted and abused, the scapegoat Glands, the coiling bowels - all of it still intact And waiting, like South America, to be set free.

And so one's horrid bulk heaves up From its recliner to stuff itself Defiantly into its carings, thence To the gymnasium for another taxing episode In the decline of one's personal Empire. Well met, Trimatchio! You've gained some weight.

Pat, though never beautiful, may yet be proud. Glibbon, Aquinas, several famous comedians, Even Lord Buddha - all were complacently obese. They lived before the fatal Scarsdale diet, When wisdom had immense vested interests And dared to smile at the vernal excellings Of the slim. What is it all for, that Gauntness, those histone arms, torsoes rippled Into breastplates - what but war? Once, however, one's declared Hers de combat, there's no need to creak about In armor. Let Hotspur and Hal dispute The relative allure of their thighs and doublets; We, Feistaff, will settle for a pint of ale Soug in a dark booth at the back of the bar, Dipping our hands into perpetually replenished Bowls of peanuts, exchanging recipes.

Omnia Acrilimus, our motto, means There is no food, however ominous We won't omnivorously devour! Flesh Of frogs, of eels, of fetuses: cheeses rank As death; eggs, seeds, sprouts, fungi, Whatever promise of growth we can divert To lift our swollen purposes. We lick our lips And lift our glasses to the clouds And huntmen whose *illegitimus* we are - Long may they delve and slaughter!

Hal speaks: Old man, put by This self-expensive meriment. Feel the pinch Of your trousers but not your desires. Recognize that pig in the mirror As a mortal enemy. Feed it nothing But scorn till it confesses itself to be the new, emaciated you. Deed those needless fifty pounds To a deserving tailor, geriatric Specialist, a grateful posterity.

Feistaff replies: Enough, dear lad. A great posterior's The cause we serve who live in hope Nat of crowns but coronaries. Do not you know that, like the swan, Even the carefulest easter soon enough dies? Why then, how then, resist the dreadful Evening's noon solace, RAT? Say I removed These wreaths of fat to yauat the shapely Cranium beneath - how would that benefit Your commonwealth, my lads? Shall every bar And bakery give way to studios Of dance and martial arts? Shall I subside On Porrier and salad greens? No wine no bread! Nor even salt, because my heart, for reasons

Of its own, will not keep pace with my Ingestive Genius. No, Feistaff defies your regimens! He cets, he drinks, and merrily repeats The process tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow.

Meanwhile tonight, just down the street, I knew a restaurant that serves Whims of inexpressible immodesty. Such peppers in oil, such onions in cream, Such breasts of capon in Sauce Supreme! I can also recommend the *boerf en dube*, *owwtrader-pasta-pulapetra*, *squab*....

No need to listen to Gargantua Ruminating old manna. That tongue will wag Until it gets a bone. Instead, let's pan Across the wider world and measure man. From suckers born every minute to old farts Drooling Flaxseed, behold the classic span Whose broad curve encloses all waistlines. Whatsoever the innocents of 28; The initial twinges rounding the bend to 32; Then 36, when mirrors are banished for their lies; The reckless shame of 44, no stopping now, It's 50 next, and horrors even more Unpeakable, until at last all waists Are wasted in the toilet of the tomb, While our immortal parts (as some believe) Swell beyond measurement and rise To glory coextensive with the sky's, Where, eternally obese, our Salms appear In Lewis larger than the troposphere. Such are the sizes all men fit, and such The consequence of eating far too much.

But seriously, Doc, am I to blame? As much as any box of Cheerios I am the product of Big Businesses, For whom I loyally, compulsively Consume. Before my infant gums Had *blinded teeth*, they tempted me With boneyed words and sugared slops Dyed to those colors research proves Would surely deprave and addict. Hyperkinetically I bolted down Each landscape of meat and potatoes Questing the grail of desert, And it was there, among those modulated sweets, My ravished tongue first learned to speak; Schoolied by paradigms of silverware, Cooking triads à la Lévi-Strauss, My mother's wit and father's Polonish Command of cliché a happy childhood, And not unrepresentative, I throw, Converting calories to play And, a few years later, to ballet. I burned With fever of caffeine, relaxed In baths of alcohol, and survived The intervals of foodlessness by smoking Kents.

This was the wisdom of our tribe (One of the largest in Minnesota), The Over-reaching, Over-achieving Over-eaters. Now, with 40 years behind me in the OOO, It would be folly to repent. Of what? Those honey-saturated hours in the pivo. Are sweet to memory still. Doubtless I'll continue to observe certain equinoctial Dietary rites, but when I diet it will be In the service of my tongue. That old recidivist, that it may eat More immediately when I am thin.

Revering heliofly to the matter of Man's first temptation and fall from grace, I must in fairness exculpate General Foods, of ol. Adam didn't sin Because Eve tempted him he chose to eat That apple. He might - we all might - have refused. But once having bitten, no slaner could wish Never to have known, never to have been Involved and implicated in the dialectic actions Of that flesh, which, in its complex Disintegrations, informs each hungry pore With news of the deliciousness of death.

Monarchs at the mike

By Arthur Marshall

Voices out of the Air
The Royal Christmas Broadcasts
1932-1981
Introduced by Tom Fleming
158pp. Heinemann. £7.95.
0 434 26680 9

Those of us who are old enough to have heard the very first Royal Christmas Broadcast from Sandringham in 1932 will remember well what the BBC so rightly calls "the sense of occasion" and the feeling that it was a regal blessing being conferred on those sufficiently pious to own a receiving set (by no means a common household object in those days). Indeed, so impressive was the event that, as the somewhat guttural tones rolled out the platitudes ("It may be that our future will lay upon us more than one stern test. Our past will have taught us how to meet it unshaken"), whole families rose to their feet and stood with bowed heads. One might, good heavens, have been either in church or in Japan.

There was some surprise and a certain uneasiness on finding that we possessed such a foreign-sounding king, surprise that is until the richly European background and parentage were recalled. Edward VIII, possibly wishing to be as different in this as in everything else, sounded like an American trying to speak Cockney. The slightly foreign voice hung on a bit with George VI but has since disappeared completely, to be replaced by a marvellously clear and limpid speech entirely suited to the material. It is required to pump forth, for the normal and chirpy tones of everyday conversation are harked. A royal occasion is hardly the moment for an animated flow ("My dear, I can barely wait to get to Balmoral").

Earlier in 1932, the King and Queen had visited Broadcasting House, recently "reconstructed" (itself "got them round" in fifty minutes), while, and practically at the same moment, Professor Picard, who looked like everybody's idea of a slightly cracked scientist, was ascending nearly 100 miles in a balloon, for one of the features of Tom Fleming's pleasant résumé of the royal Christmas talks is to list items of interest that were going on elsewhere in the same year, and Picard's basket then loomed large in the public imagination.

This, in 1939 and while George VI was making what is possibly the most warily remembered broadcast of them all, the one about "I said to the man who stood at the Ode of the Year", was a reminder that the Spanish Civil War was ending, our Phoney War was on, and the Royal

Oak had been disastrously sunk.

It is interesting to discover that the Monarchy did not at first take kindly to the idea of broadcasting and that it required ten years of postal wooing to coax George V to the microphone at Christmas (and even as a listener he refused to have an aerial on the Sandringham roof). To get him going, His Majesty preferred, instead of the customary red light signal, a tap on the shoulder when it was time to start, and he had to be warned not to rustle or crackle his script. How merry to learn that he sat down too heavily in the favourite wicker armchair from which he was to speak and went right through the seat. Those hoping for some rattling royal oath (imagine Henry VIII) will be disappointed. "God bless my soul!" seems to have sufficed.

In 1932 the public reaction was ecstatic, and the *Spectator*, commenting on the moment when the King cleared his throat, cheered all its readers by saying "A King who coughs is a fallow human being". The hour-long round-the-world Prologue to the affair was tastefully summed up by the dear old *Morning Post* as "a family re-union on a scale of terror". It was estimated that his voice had reached twenty million people, and "Paris talked of nothing else". Mr Fleming loyally and enthusiastically states, an announcement that at least one reader who knows the French likes to leave to doubt.

With every royal message that one is now able here to live through again (and many of us have heard all of them), one sympathizes increasingly with the crushing formality of their lives, and the alleged fondness for practical jokes in private becomes entirely understandable. Jokes and the unexpected pleased - Victoria used to let out a happy peal when anybody tumbled over and measured their length, and wasn't it Queen Alexandra who added apple beds, when the apple pie and had belonged to somebody else, and this, despite the fact that both in general were a tricky subject when considered in connection with her rather fidgety royal spouse. Foreign princes used to squint each other with soda-water and ride bicycles up and down the palace corridors ("We shrieked"). In others this activity would be called "letting off steam", a concept that seems a shade incongruous when applied to Victoria, formidable even in death.

Who, one wonders, writes the royal speeches? A Secretary? A Courtier? Some duty don't they have been down the years, and what else could the matter contain but words that are reassuring, forward-looking, dedicated, hopeful for the future, and breathing a general and Christian belief in the goodness of mankind. And very nice too.

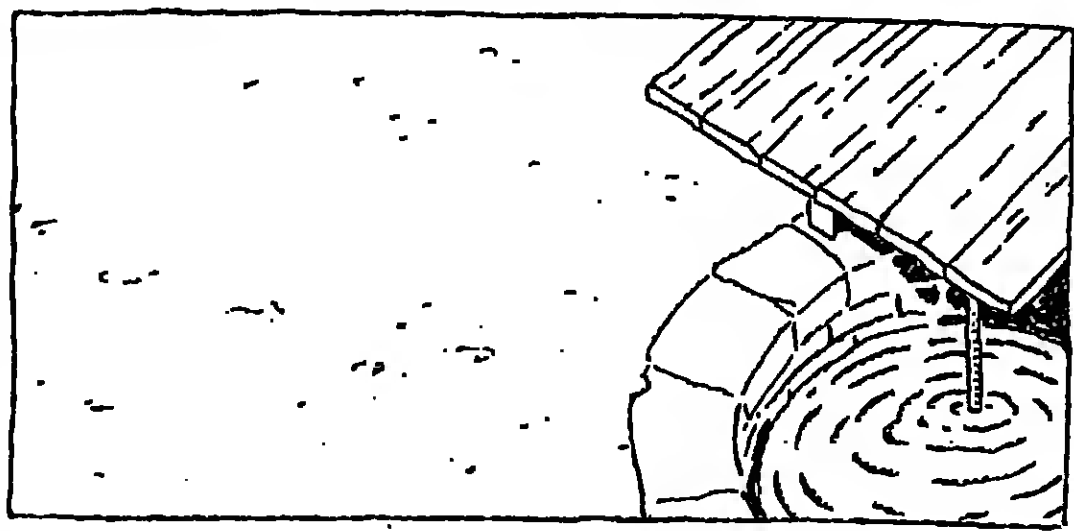
Park outside

by Hugo Williams

MICHAEL PARKINSON:
Parkinson's Love
With drawings by Michael Lewis
158pp. Michael Joseph. £5.95.
0 9073 605 X

Anyone perusing the jacket could be forgiven for thinking this was Parky's autobiography. His caricature features appear against a Lloyds-like background by Alan Lowndes, suggesting a celebrity's return to Coronation Street. But it's only a collection of his short articles, reprinted from *Punch* and the *Sunday Times* with a new introduction and a conclusion headed "Success".

The articles are autobiographical in the sense that they are written in the original, old-fashioned type of New Journalism, so if you like Parky's brand of chimney-sweeping view here it is in colloquial like chip butler with maverick top, as grumpy foot talk, but read as sen-



HOURS OF SILENCE FOLLOWED, PUNCTUATED ONLY BY THE ALMOST IMPERCEPTIBLE SOUND OF THE HAWSER LEAVING AND ENTERING THE SAGO.....

This example of the work of Glen Baxter appears in 5 x 5, a new anthology of text and drawings, edited by Asa Benveniste (68pp. Trigram Press, 32 Windsor Road, Hebden Bridge, West Yorks HX7 8LF. Paperback, £3.75.) which also features contributions from Ian Breakwell, Ivor Culler, Anthony Earnshaw and Jeff Nuttall.

The princess and the goblin

By Lorna Sage

NIGEL DEMPSTER:
H.R.H. The Princess Margaret
A Life Unfulfilled
192pp. Quartet Books. £7.95.
0 7043 2314 1

Now all gather round, while Mr Dempster tells a story.

The Dee Valley had never seemed so tranquil or beautiful as Princess Margaret looked out from the bedroom, on the morning of her twentieth birthday.

Something wrong, surely? But let's not fidget.

... looking back on half her lifetime, she may well have thought, "if I had been allowed to marry Peter, I am sure we would have been happy. And who knows? It might have lasted."

Settle down, pass round the trolleys, draw a little closer to the fire, there's a chilly draught from somewhere. This is the Bad Fairy's story. For wedding year, the goblin's tale of Unhappily Ever After.

Certainly, Princess Margaret has never been more out in the cold, and Nigel Dempster's timing is impeccable, whatever you may think of his style. And in fact, as he gets into his stride, the pathos and the local colour fade away, and times, places, fortunes parade across the page with an awful harshness. There are no "intimate revelations", but the effect of lining up the old ones and to end it quite nastily enough, vaguely reminiscent of something Nabokov once said about the copulation of gladiators, because of course, that's what this is: a book about a princess, a princess who was thinking of pornography, whereas *A Life Unfulfilled* couldn't be more decent. It's all about decency, and how it was lost to her, a princess at his club to discover that the London gossip column had been universal in their condemnation of her actions, and it provides a rather special kind of guide to - not exactly what could be done - but what could be said, and how, from the *dolce vita* and glory of the 1950s to the 1970s state "permissiveness".

If Princess Margaret herself (what ever that means) seems already to be getting a little lost, that's appropriate in his way. But back to the story. Childhood passes quickly, in half a dozen pages. Girl Scout Elizabeth is groomed to rule, Brownie Margaret Rose sings and dances and acts, while just off stage Peter Townsend flies too many stories, marries, and becomes the King's equerry. The Princess begins to lead a double life, partying with the eligible her father approved ("two Scottish dukedoms

and three massive estates") while secret romance blossoms, and is eventually, after Townsend's divorce, the build-up to her sister's coronation, plastered over the world's newspapers, with not a murmur from the British press until - as Dempster says, with a kind of wonder - "the People in age-old style, repeated the stories, and then denounced them".

A pattern is set: public opinion calls the tune, Townsend is exiled to Belgium, and two more years of partying follow before Margaret decides, at twenty-five, not to marry him, "mindful of the Church's teaching that Christian marriage is indissoluble, and conscious of my duty to the Commonwealth".

The famous broadcast has an odd look these days. Perhaps the most "period" event, though, is the Princess's hotbed engagement on the rebound to the last of the eligibles, not "spoken for", Billy Wallace - a seven-figure family fortune... uncertain health... dabbled on the Stock Exchange... Le Touquet for a weekend's gambling... Newman, Epstein, Ascot, and Goodwood... White, and Pratt's... the 400... The 1950s, like a new-old-fashioned novel, set "to go" against money and position and "duty", and neither side won. We end, temporarily plotless, on the edge of Balmoral, with a small flurry of references to the arts - Louis Armstrong ("your Princess Margaret is one hip chick"), and the Royal Ballet - heralding the entry on the scene of Antony Armstrong-Jones.

The style changes alarmingly. Tony is "the first man to peel from Margaret the carefully applied veneer of her Royal upbringing", he sets up a secret meeting place in Rotherhithe, he has "plans". But sex no sooner makes its appearance on cue for the 1960s than it turns ambiguous - the first two best men proposed for the wedding (Jeremy Fry, Jeremy Thorpe) are rejected. In favour of Dr Roger Gilliat (he was married to writer Penelope Gilliat, who contributed to *Queen* and *Vogue*, and seemed refreshingly heterosexual). And then, the marriage somehow includes the Press, rather than shutting them out, not only through the Snowdon photographic business, but in friendships with Patrick Leitchfield, Jocelyn Stevens, Peter Sellers and Britt Ekland - so that as increasingly serious flirtations and mutual infidelities turn family life into a charade, news leaks proliferate. Dempster is discreetly indiscreet: about it all, and again, perhaps, the loose ends are most telling - the sad subplot of Robin Douglas-Horne, for instance, who lost his £30-a-week job playing the piano at the Clarion when he sold a photograph of his employer John Aspinall to his swimming pool with a

tiger to the *Daily Express* for £50, and who "committed suicide when... some of Princess Margaret's letters to him turned up for auction in New York".

The suddenly small sums of money involved give one pause, though they lead on naturally enough to the 1970s, and the era of Roddy Llewellyn. "Princess Margaret", veteran of a thousand gossip columns, now becomes apologetic, a career in herself, and a focus for the eerie indifference that against all statistical probability seems to have overtaken her world. No sooner is her name linked with Roddy's, than he is beset with media temptations (mindful, perhaps, of false starts in the brewery, the asbestos mine, the College of Arms); their first idyllic house party, when they lead a single, degenerate with awful swiftness into his "recording career". We are always together - one of our favourites is *The Balls are Ringing*. I am very serious about slogging. I'll try to get a bit of gardening done as well... On big brother Dai selling his story to the *News of the World*, Dempster reports, Roddy said to a friend: "I'm told he's getting £30,000, and all he has offered me is a sun lamp... If half of this is about me, he should hand over £15,000 - this is the end."

Well, not quite the end, but not far off. There's the Princess's divorce in 1978, unthinkable a few years before, and Lord Snowdon's remarriage, and Dempster, updating himself as ever, is now unshocked by homosexuality among the younger generation. Hard drugs, too, put in an appearance, as children of old friends ask photographs of Margaret for cash for the pushers. On the other hand, Roddy's eventual disappearance, we're told, makes way for the 1980s, and a new start - "at peace with herself... The past, with all its perverse misunderstandings of fate, seemed to her like a foreign country... But though the exiles of story-telling may leave Mr Dempster gazing into a wide blue yonder, two to your *Daily Mail* and what do you find? "Princess Margaret's new escort, 'Old Etonian' banking their Norman Lonsdale, who spent a week with her last month at her £250,000 villa in Mustique. The real story of *A Life Unfulfilled* is the one about the Princess and the Media, which is why, doubtless, Dempster seems most at ease, even jealous, on tight-lipped Lord Snowdon, and ungenerally forgiving to the helpless Robins and Roddys. "Princess Margaret" says the blurb, "captured the public imagination", but the hook has it the other way round: the "public imagination" has captured her, and she's acted out its rapid fantasies like someone under a very bad spell. Indeed, ever since.

Military Drinking

Sir, - As P. H. Blyth observes (Letters, November 20) there is in many societies a close connection between drinking groups and warfare; and it would be easy to argue (against the views of Michael Yardley in the *New Statesman* of October 2) that this connection is a necessary and useful one. To quote Euripides' *Bacchae*, "Dionysus has some share in the work of Ares".

Two aspects are important. Soldiers cannot always be on the battlefield, and the drinking group is the most widespread leisure activity of the warrior band, reinforcing the solidarity and exclusiveness needed for the performance of its functions in war. Psychologically too the release of inhibitions experienced with alcohol is closely related to the heightened state of consciousness typical of the battlefield.

These aspects relate to constant human characteristics and to the inevitable stresses of war: it is not therefore surprising to find Plato in the *Lysis* defending the ancient equivalent of the mess games and the ritualized violence of pay night as part of the preparation for war. Modern armies are notoriously reticent on such questions; but it would be interesting to know whether there is any closer connection between drinking rituals and styles of warfare, for instance whether different regiments have different mess customs corresponding to their functions in war.

OSWYN MURRAY.
Balliol College, Oxford OX1 3BJ.

'84 Charing Cross Road'

Sir, - I am sorry that Eric Korn should have spoiled his interesting review of *'84 Charing Cross Road* (Commentary, December 11) with such a cheap sneer about the bookshop which Marks and Co ran at that address. It is tempting to attribute his lapse to a compelling need to find a suitable poreword but I suspect that the truth of the matter is that Mr Korn is too much of a newcomer to the trade to have known Marks and Co at its very successful best.

If in its latter years, the firm of Marks and Co did not include in its stock all the treasures of previous decades, the fault lay in the increasing age and ill-health of the partners, Eric Marks and Mark Cohen. In its heyday Marks and Co was a good bookshop and one with which my firm was happy to have had a close association for almost fifty years.

ANTHONY ROTA.
Bertram Rota Limited, 30 and 31 Long Acre, London WC2E 9LT.

Gluck

Sir, - That Peter Conrad's commentaries on operas and their productions are matters of narcissistic preoccupation is something that anyone who reads him must immediately notice. But occasionally, when his misapprehensions of a composer in the interests of glamorous writing are sufficiently gross, the need to protest becomes urgent. In his account of Gluck (Commentary, December 11) Conrad characterizes his operas as "elegant essays in regret and mournful leave-taking", and claims that Alcibiades and Orfeo in the eponymous operas are facilitated "into the post-mortem condition of chastened resignation which is the ideal of peacelovers". I find that difficult to square with Gluck's adoration to the first Paris Orfeo to "scream as though your bones were being sawn through", with Orfeo's fierce determination to retrieve Euridice from Hades at whatever cost, his taming of the Furies, or his long wrangle with Euridice herself. Nor does the famous aria "Che far senza Euridice" "helplessly repeat itself because immobilized in despair". It is a conventional rondo-form, as Haydn's symphonic finales "immobil-

ized in despair") with passionate and varied cries of grief between each reprise of the main theme, itself capable of varied and intensified expression, as Conrad must know from Calles's recording.

All that Conrad has done is to repeat in fancy language the stale clichés about Gluck's being marvellous, chaste and passionless. Actually the determination and anguish of his greatest characters make nonsense of the comparison with the loathsome sculptures of Canova. Gluck was, rather famously, interested in investing his works with as much drama as possible, so that the claim that "it's the ambition of Gluck's people to stiffen into monuments" is the precise opposite of the truth - but then paradox, or at least contradiction, is Conrad's preferred mode of expression.

MICHAEL TANNER.
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'Resolution and Independence'

Sir, - J. M. Cameron is surely mistaken in calling the inclusion of "Resolution and Independence" in *The New Oxford Book of Christian Verse* very strange (November 27). He is viewing it back to front: the importance of the Christian standpoint lies less in the leech-gatherer (who happened to be Scottish, as Dorothy's journal witnesses) than in the poet, who experiences a sort of conversion on this occasion. After the opening verses' loyal hedonism, the poet wonders whether anyone who "for himself will take no heed at all" can really expect others to "Build for him, sow [sic] for him or at his call Love him". Surely this is a questioning glance at the lilies of the field? Two verses later, "whether it were by pecuniary gain, / A leading from above, a something given", he meets the leech-gatherer, whose own trust in providence, though, specifically stated, is not the heart of the poem.

In the poet, after another brief despair, a lapse, and expressed as such) he inspired fortitude. "God," said I, "ha my help and stay secure; / I'll think of the Leech-gatherer on the lonely moor." Whatever the editor's printed comment on the poem, its inclusion here is surely no change, describing as it does a struggle of heart from "every man for himself" to a traditional (if somewhat vaguely conceived) Christian fortitude.

JENNY KING.
84 Knowle Lane, Sheffield, S11 9SB.

Pangrams

Sir, - David Huoter (Letters, November 27) offers two pangrams, requiring thirty and thirty-one letters respectively.

I did better than this at my prep school in the 1920s, with "Waltz, bad nymphs, for quick jigs vex" (28), and

RALPH INSTONE.
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Frederick Douglass

Sir, - Anthony Quinton to his review of *The Oxford Book of American Literary Anecdotes* (December 4) refers to Frederick Douglass as a "freed" slave. Frederick Douglass was a slave who escaped. If he was freed, he freed himself.

HOWARD M. ZIFF.
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Harvester Press would like us to point out that *Roman Britain* by Malcolm Todd, which was reviewed in our issue of November 6, is also available in a clothbound version (£20. 0 7108 0300 1).

to the editor

The new editor of *The Times Literary Supplement* will be Jeremy Treglown. He will take up his appointment when the present editor, John Gross, leaves at the beginning of January. Mr Treglown, who is 35, is at present assistant editor on the TLS. Before entering journalism he taught English literature at Lincoln College, Oxford, and University College London.

Although Boswell had Hoole's notes and Hawkins's book while writing his *Life*, he chose to ignore these later utterances of Johnson's. But the setters of the competition evidently assumed that Boswell's second or third-hand account - Boswell was at his home in Edinburgh when Johnson died - must be the authentic truth.

It is remarkable how the myth of Boswell's reliability as a biographer persists. Perhaps this falsification - which immediately follows: his seriously bowdlerized version of Johnson's last prayer, the authentic text of which was available in Hawkins, but which still causes trouble for students of Johnson's religion - was merely negligence on Boswell's part (but how did the "m den" get in?). Some modern Boswellians, however, may praise it as still another instance of Boswell's "artistry". Opinions may differ as to whether the marmoreal "God bless you, my dear" is more artistic - more moving and convincing - than the grumble of a sick old man that his milk was handed to him clumsily, or (as W. J. Bate terms the final ejaculation) the salutation of a Roman gladiator.

DONALD GREENE.
Department of English, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, California 90007.

W. P. Crozier

Sir, - May I comment on two points in the review by J. R. Vincent of Alastair Hetherington's *Guardian Years* in your issue of December 4. He writes of my father, W. P. Crozier (Editor 1932-44), that "his recently published memoirs show that he enjoyed the confidence and

respect of the great". My father did not write his memoirs, but your reviewer is probably thinking of *Off the Record: Political Interviews 1933-43*. W. P. Crozier, edited with an introduction by A. J. P. Taylor, a selection of my father's political interviews during his editorship, published in 1973.

The other point your reviewer describes C. P. Scott bicycling into the office "through the Didsbury dusk". C. P. Scott lived at The Firs, a handsome house with large grounds in Fallowfield, a suburb of Manchester several miles nearer to the city than Didsbury, and it was from Fallowfield that he bicycled in every afternoon to Cross Street.

MARY CROZIER.
Flat 1, 12 Priory Road, Kew Gardens, Surrey.

'The Princess'

Sir, - Mary R. Lefkowitz's breadth is impressive ("Princess Ida, the Amazons, and a women's college curriculum", November 27), her concern for detail less so. She upbraids other historians for eclecticism, ignorance and distortion; in a similar vein, she incorrectly states that Tennyson's *Princess* (mysteriously dated in the second sentence "1857-61") was published in 1861, i.e. in the same year as Bachofen's *Mother Right*. *The Princess* was first published in 1847, and had reached its seventeenth edition by 1868. It would merely have taken a bit of the effort Ms Lefkowitz requires of others to learn that *The Princess* is very much a work of the 1840s, and to place it in the 1860s is totally misleading.

MARY STOREY.
Department of English Language and Literature, The University of Birmingham, PO Box 363, Birmingham B15 2TT.

Among this week's contributors

WAGNET MOROAN is the editor of Richard Crossman's *Diaries of a Cabinet Minister, 1976-77*, and of *The Bookbench Diaries of Richard Crossman*, which is published next week.

JOHN NAUGHTON is the television critic of *The Listener*.

EDWARD NORMAN's books include *Church and Society in England 1770-1970*, 1976.

REDMOND O'HANLON has recently completed a study of Joseph Conrad and Charles Darwin.

CHARLES ROSEN is Professor of Music at the State University of New York. His books include *Schoenberg, 1976*.

LORNA SAGE teaches English in the School of English and American Studies at the University of East Anglia.

CHARLES ROSEN is Professor of Music at the State University of New York. His books include *Schoenberg, 1976*.

BRUCE HILLIER's books include *The World of Art Deco, 1971*, and *The World of New Antiques, 1977*.

SIR HAROLD ORSON is an Honorary Fellow of Orle College, Oxford.

PAUL JOHNSON's recent books include *A History of Christianity, 1976*, and *Enemies of Society, 1977*.

MARK COOPER's books include *Beethoven - The Last Decade, 1970*.

ERIC KORN is an antiquarian bookseller in London.

MARY LITTON's recent books include *The Lyons in India, 1979*, and *Edwin Lutyens, 1980*.

HYAM MACCORY is the author of *Revolution in Judaea, 1980*.

ARTHUR MARSHALL's most recent collection of essays and observations *I'll Let You Know* was published earlier this year.

JOHN WRIGHTMAN is the author of *The Concept of the Avant-Garde - Explorations in Modernism, 1973*.

C. M. WOODHOUSE's books include *The Struggle for Greece 1941-1949, 1976*.

J. M. ZIMAN is Professor of Physics at the University of Bristol. His *Puzzles, Problems and Enigmas* was published earlier this month.

remainders

BY ERIC KORN



P.S. HI A.R.A.O.M./O.L./M.O.T.A.I. A.C.A.

Do you have any information or intelligent guesses about the initials above? Magical spells, metrical sock sizes, suppressed quaggoes? If you can help, you will make Nicholas Barker (Head of Conservation at the British Library) a happier man. The mysterious messages, and others similar, appear at the end of each scroll of an otherwise not very important, beautiful or distinguished fifteenth-century Italian manuscript, which Mr Barker describes under the rubric - it sounds the last line of a lost Iliad - "o Curious Copy of Sallust".

And what that manuscript has in common with a leaf of William Blake's *America*, a Lewis Carroll letter complaining about the text of the Revised Version, and the Gospels of King Iyasu II of Ethiopia, is that all were sold at some time by that most omniscient and scholarly of booksellers, Alan G. Thomas, and are described by their present owners in an unusual kind of festchrift, from customer to supplier, compiled secretly in honour of his seventieth birthday. This was the occasion of a cheerful surprise-party held at Sotheby's recently, where Mr Thomas - whose beard now goes to absurd lengths expressed himself as suitably astonished, and the editors of the present volume, Christopher de Hamel and Richard Linenthal, mnda gracious remarks and permitted themselves a tasteless witicism or two about the buyers' premium.

Five Books and Book Collecting (James Hall, 84pp, many plates, £15.00/97471 03 X) has a foreword by Lawrence Durrell which in turn makes this book a necessary item in any new edition of Alan Thomas's Durrell bibliography. Durrell tells how Thomas acted as a kind of benign fence or party-wall between his zoological brother Gerald and himself. When Gerald was off on animal-collecting expeditions, Lawrence would sell his zoological books to buy Elizabethan texts; Gerald returned the compliment each time Lawrence went to Cyprus. Thomas bought the books every time, kept them, and negotiated peace.

The festchrift contains various affectionate anecdotes, and rather more serious paleography than a dealer in books and manuscripts usually merits. David Rogers of the Bodleian tells one of those biophilic fishermen's stories of finding

the defective fragment of a 1535 Book of Hours that just happened to perfect the fragment he had bought at the Turl Cash Book Shop forty years earlier. Jerry Campbell of Southern Methodist University describes the Durandus *Rationale* *divinorum Officiorum* (Mainz 1495), which was once called "the first work from the pen of an uninspired writer ever printed"; one needs to read the phrase a couple of times before realizing it is not a putdown. This is the book that Alan Thomas took to show Solomon Potesman, a scholar of great ability and dedication, when he was dying in Middlesex Hospital. Alan Thomas wrote an obituary of Potesman (hatefully described in the festchrift as "the eccentric, little-washed, cloth-capped ameteur incunabulist") for *The Times*, and at greater length in *The Book Collector*, that is a model of how to combine honesty with affection. At the presentation party I met Potes's surviving niece, who was looking for a sketch of her uncle, with a certain amount of GBH in mind; unfortunately I was unable to effect an introduction.



Speaking of which, have you come across any Faroese dolly papers recently? *Føroyska Politiken*, as it might be, or *Thorðsmál Tíðingir*? They are pretty thin on the ground, if George Kurian's *Book of International Lists* (444pp, Macmillan, £5.95, 0 333 32386 6) is anything to go by, and the point I'm making is that *The Book of International Lists* isn't anything to go by, except as providing more support for my belief that anything that can be expressed numerically is not worth saying. The book (which I shall henceforth refer to as BIL, so that I can later make some joke about suffering, like Pierre Boulez, from BIL-itis) is the soft-bound edition of *The Book of International Rankings*, this title being thought more appropriate for the paperback. BIL was published in 1979 and some of the data (the cost of a taxi in Frankfurt, Olympic medals in 1976 per capita of population - well done Bermuda!) have not grown more pertinent with the passage of time.

I was struck by the fact that the Faroese, though highly literate - 99% on a par with Britain, Gibraltar and Greenland and just below educational Utopias like Bermuda, Nauru and Macao - are shamefully

blando has just brought another three questionnaires from the United World Statistical Service. "Bring me my fishing-spear, and tell them the answers are 3.8, 42, and 11 kilograms per hectare." This is just the top of the atoll. If this obvious stuff is being peddled as sober fact, what confidence can I have in the respectable-seeming detail of every table? Does the Netherlands really produce twice as much cement as Malaysia, for example, or has one figure or another slipped its decimal moorings, like the Faroese and the Caymen? And I am not talking about simple misprints, like the extraordinary transposition of columns that tells us there are 83,673,128 libraries in Denmark (can't you see them, packed solid and piled ten deep from Flensburg to Elsinore? They'd have to keep the pigs in the stacks. No bed for Bacon, indeed) or the blunder that gives Macao two separate entries in Table 386 (vocational training), once at a respectable 40th and again at a shameful 139th. What does worry me is that this elaborate, fatuous stuff can go from computer to book and thence back to computer, without ever - even after two years in print, where any layman can fall over absurdities - without seeming to have been proof-read, edited or passed through a vertebrate brain.

Consider the rather important Table 61: Percentage of National Income received by the poorest 20% of population. You may be surprised that Liberia tops the chart as the most egalitarian state, with 13% of National Income going to the poorest fifth. Kurian advises us that this chart should be read in conjunction with the preceding chart, showing Percentage of National Income received by the richest 5%. It should indeed. Turn to the preceding chart, and lo! Liberia's name lends all the rest, with a cool 60% of National Income going to the fat cats. But this should be ten seats per thousand and ten thousand Caymans in all, or 0.1 per thousand as it says and only one seat (reserved for the Grand Cayman, no doubt), or whatever other possibilities suggest themselves.

George Kurian does explain that the figures have to be treated with caution, drawing attention to certain anomalies like the fading (Table 280) that in the Vintico City there are 1,192,000 university professors for every million people; he even goes as far as to say that the figures for proportion of Christians (Brazil 100%, Rumania 100%) do not correspond to reality in a mathematical sense. But other anomalies you have to find for yourself, like the fact that 35,966 of the population of China live in towns of over 30,000 people (Table 17); although only 32% live in towns of any size (Table 16); or that 31% of all married Panamanians are divorced, even though the divorce rate there is only 0.5 per thousand. Maybe they go to divorce court their divorces, suggested my actuarial consultant, a notably ill-minded man, who also argued that the bizarre low annual death rate for Pitcairn Island - less than two per thousand - doesn't necessarily mean that all Pitcairners live to be 300; they may be a very young population (boatloads of multi-nous babes coming in on every tide); or maybe they all go to nearby Christmas Island to die, which would account for that misnamed spot having the highest death rate in the world.

Now I'm not really complaining about anomalies, inadequate or improbable figures from a bunch of Pacific atolls with populations too small to maintain a adequate Civil Service, and better things to do with their time, like lying in the net eating corn and smoking roro-rongo. (Ya Shalan, the damned orang

the least disorderly were the Central African Empire, under the homicidal lunatic Bokassa, and Equatorial Guinea, under the lunatic hemide Macias Nguema.

George Kurian's religious prejudices are worth examining. He describes Hinduism as "not essentially different from the animist religions of Africa", and provides the following gratuitous account of Islam:

an expansionary (sic) religion and backed by petrodollars. It has been making gains in Africa, a continent that had been ravaged by Arab slave traders until the twentieth century. (Islam is one of the few religions that expressly sanctions slavery). Islam's appeal is enhanced by a number of factors, particularly its approval of polygamy, its easy divorce laws, and its simple theology, almost entirely borrowed from Judaism.

Which is not to say that simple pleasure cannot be extracted from this riot of dubious data. Here is a list of countries that - as far as my unorigious examination goes - top the charts once and once only each. Can you guess what peculiar excellence distinguishes: Mali, French Polynesia, Djibuti, Yemen Arab Republic, Luxembourg, Turks and Caicos Islands, England, and Wales? Answers at the foot of this column.

What should a young woman, etc

To which one can only reply "That's a darling question, a darling question", or alternatively "I don't know. Mistah Bones, what should a young woman, etc?" The words come from what I guess is a list of alms or dances, written in a contemporary hand on the front endpaper of a fragmentary copy of Quaresmius and Parthenius, probably the 1677 edition. Others include "The Milling May", "The Begging of Jigs", "Noble Marquess", "Down to the Banks", "The Soldier's Delight", "Merry Month of May", "Country Bumpkin", and "The Old Woman Something", and "Some thing"; no doubt several something would yield to a more expert paleographer.

Are all these known, I ask myself, to the sort of musicologists who know this sort of thing? (I keep remembering the eminent Solomon Potesman, who found a passing reference to Shakespeare's *Love Labour's Wonnes*, on a contemporary newspaper, and dined out on it for ever after.) If a seventeenth-century manuscript list of pop-song titles is of any possible interest, value or curiosity to anyone out there, it is yours for the asking.

Answers: Mali: fertility rate; French Polynesia: fatal industrial accident; Djibuti: divorce; Y.A.R.: expenditure on Civil Service as proportion of total budget; Luxembourg: beer-making; Turks and Caicos: receiving letters; England and Wales: counter-felting.



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In the face of failure

By Mary Lutyens

VIRGINIA SURTEES (Editor):
The Diary of Ford Madox Brown
237pp. Published for the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art by Yale University Press. £15.
0 300 02743 5

This diary is not only a detailed record of the working methods of a dedicated artist but a valuable social document and a poignant account of the travail of a creative spirit dogged by failure. Ford Madox Brown (1812-1893), who became closely associated with Dante Gabriel Rossetti, was several years older than the members of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. His first twenty years were spent on the Continent with occasional visits to England to see relatives. His father had been a ship's purser during the Napoleonic wars who had afterwards remained abroad with his wife, Charlotte Madox, because it was cheaper than living in England. Early recognizing his son's exceptional talent, he allowed him to study art in Bruges, Ghent, Antwerp and Paris. In 1837 the boy had a picture exhibited at Ghent and, four years later, at the Royal Academy in London. By this time both his parents were dead.

In 1840 Brown had come to London and married his first cousin, Elizabeth Madox Bromley. A daughter, Lucy (who was to become the wife of William Michael Rossetti), was born in July 1843. A year later the Browns went to Italy for the sake of Elizabeth's failing health, and in Rome Brown met the German Nazarenes, who greatly influenced him. In 1846 they were to be on their way back to England when Elizabeth died in Paris. Brown had to borrow money to bring her coffin back to England, where she was buried in Highgate Cemetery.

The diary starts fourteen months later when Brown had a rat-infested studio off Portland Place with a lodger close by. Unable to keep his beloved little daughter with him, he had sent her to live at Gravesend with her maternal aunt, who had just started a school for young children. Though forced to be frugal, Brown was not too badly off, having inherited a small property from his mother which brought in £100 a year in rent. A sensitive, generous, warm-hearted man, he missed his wife and child grievously, but he had a few good friends and was absorbed in his current work, a huge picture (146 1/2 x 116 1/2 in) of "Chaucer Reading his Poems at the Court of Edward III" (this was a great lover of history). The crowded canvas necessitated the hiding of models, figures, gilded letters and ornaments, and judding miles to search of velvet and brocade from second-hand dealers. (One forgets what immense distances the poor had to walk on those days.) He made many of the costumes himself and spent hours arranging the drapery.

A voracious worker, usually working concurrently on two or more pictures, he was very slow, chiefly because he was forever scraping out the previous day's labour. It is surprising how much he painted by lamp-light and how often he had breakfasted (to save fuel?) and then his breakfast consisted only of toast. He was evidently wretchedly lonely, uncared for and half-starved. He dined on a mutton chop and, tipped off tea and toast with an occasional bottle of ale and a grog when "singed". He was buoyed up, however, in those days by faith in himself as an artist. Rossetti's request that he should become his pupil in March 1848 (the year the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood was founded) brought him a new circle of acquaintances as well as friendship with the whole Rossetti family.

Brown describes one of his female models as "a devil, a devil". God knows he was a devil in tempting him to be unfaithful to his wife, whose grave he visited regularly. Most of the professional models seem to have been prostitutes then, and a high-minded, virile, romantic man of twenty-seven, as Brown was

and very good-looking too, judging by Rossetti's portrait of him on the jacket of this book - must have had a hard struggle against such temptations. In 1849 or 1850 he eventually succumbed to a young model, Emma Hill. A daughter, Catherine (Katie), was born to them on November 11, 1850. (She was to marry Franz Hueffer; their son was Ford Madox Ford.) In April 1853, Brown married Emma, though she was so uneducated that she could barely sign her name. (Virginia Surtees in her thoroughness has examined both the marriage register and Katie's baptismal record.) They lived first in a cottage at Stockwell and it was in the garden there that Brown painted his extraordinary picture "The Pretty Miss Lamb" with Emma and Katie as models. The lamb, which was a perfect nuisance, eating all the flowers in the garden, were brought daily from nearby Clapham Common. However long one looks at this picture it is impossible to discover how the mother is holding the child.

Brown certainly loved his pretty Emma, calling her "the most beautiful duck in existence", but it was only after this marriage with its added responsibilities of helping Emma's mother as well as keeping a wife and two children, that his real money worries began. He was able to exhibit, but his work not only failed to sell but was ignored, and when he did occasionally find a buyer the remuneration was negligible compared to the work he had put into it. He auctioned his entrancing landscape "An English Autumn Afternoon", which had taken him six months to complete, at Phillips's for £9 out of which the frame had cost £4. His landscapes are far the most enjoyable of his pictures.

From Stockwell the Browns moved to Hampstead, then Hendon, and in September 1853 to a very small house at Finchley. They kept one maid for £5 a year, which Brown considered good pay, which is interesting to compare the relative prices of those days. A night at St Albans cost them 9s (equivalently small) - Brown had expected to pay 16s; the entrance fee for St Albans Cathedral was 1s for two tickets; a ready-made coat and trousers cost 3 guineas; two seats at Drury Lane 5s, yet a trip to Paris for nearly three weeks on his own had cost Brown only £1 6s 6d. He allowed Emma £2 10s a month for dress, which seems very generous.

At Fulham, Brown painted his best-known picture, "The Last of England", inspired by the 1852 gold rush to Australia. His fortunes were then at their nadir. He was "broken to spirit and a miserable wretch" (Brown expresses a truly pitiful self-appraisal), who writes: "Whoever had a tendency to a fellow human being worships God in the act". Nevertheless, Brown admired much of Millais's work. Holman Hunt's art he admired even more, though he had no fondness for either artist. Ruskin he had detested ever since this most influential of critics had failed to say a word in praise of his "Christ Washing Peter's Feet", exhibited at the RA in 1852. Brown takes a small revenge in a picture of Ruskin reading at a meeting at Denmark Hill to raise money to help the widow of Thomas Seddon, the artist, who had been a great friend of Brown's: "Ruskin was playful & childish & the tea table overcharged with cakes and sweets as for a juvenile party. After this, about an hour later, wine and wine was again produced of which R. again partook largely, reaching out his thin paw & swiftly absorbing or 4 large lumps of cake to succour."

On January 20, 1853, Emma gave birth to a son, Oliver (Nolly). A few months later Brown was again depressed, this time by the death of a brother, which he found degrading, although he had applied unsuccessfully for a mastership at two art colleges and was teaching for nothing at the Working Men's College. "Gave my first lesson for a guinea", he noted, "and am no longer a gentleman."

He was continually quarrelling with Emma now, either over her extravagance or the bouts of drinking lessons he had to deliver. "I have been her weakness", in "The Last of England" the wife's face is faithfully copied from Emma (it had taken four weeks to paint the ribbon of her bonnet); she looks pensive but trusting whereas he expresses on the husband's face a self-portrait, is despairing. An eminent architect once wrote that when a man's profession fails, his wife may weep but the man bleeds. Brown had bled and died; in consequence he had become touchy and cantankerous, and even at the worst times could forget his misery in the joy of creation. "Whenever I set to designing I feel in the most ethereal and exalted state possible. I do not hurry with it because it is such enjoyment."

In October 1854, Rossetti came to stay to offer to paint the calf in his picture "Drooping", and remained six weeks. On December 17, Brown was writing that Rossetti seemed

not to take any hints, moreover the two children being in the house & one stupid girl being insufficient for so much work Emma put her in the fire and her confinement & he having had his bed made up on the floor of the parlour . . . and not getting up till eleven, and moreover making himself insufferably disagreeable he had terrified Katie by threatening to put her in the fire and borrowed Brown's only warm coat among other things besides my finances being reduced to £2.12 which must last till 20th January. I told him delicately that he must go - or go home at night by bus - that he said was too expensive.

Rossetti never offered to pay a penny towards his keep although at this time he was able to sell almost everything he painted to Ruskin. A year later, still impoverished, Brown lent him £15, which was never repaid. How many struggling artists would lend two months' income to a friend without any security, especially to one who not only had a rich patron himself but the same patron for his only responsibility, his mistress Elizabeth Siddall?

Rossetti emerges in these pages as completely odious, though Brown, who continued to love him in spite of everything, makes one attempt to exonerate him. After abusing him for his venom and spite he continues that he considers him "such a great artist, that anything tending to give a correct insight into his character is as it were public property", and extols the help he gave to "unknown or rising artists" by persuading his own patrons to buy their pictures: "I could name a hundred instances of the most disinterested and noble minded conduct towards his art rivals which places him far above Hunt and Millais for greatness of soul."

Millais, successful, well off, without any responsibilities, and cared for at home by indulgent parents, infuriated Brown by his blather that "no really good man is ever unsuccessful in life". Among examples of "realists" then going to the dogs (Brown expresses a truly pitiful self-appraisal), who writes: "Whoever had a tendency to a fellow human being worships God in the act". Nevertheless, Brown admired much of Millais's work. Holman Hunt's art he admired even more, though he had no fondness for either artist. Ruskin he had detested ever since this most influential of critics had failed to say a word in praise of his "Christ Washing Peter's Feet", exhibited at the RA in 1852. Brown takes a small revenge in a picture of Ruskin reading at a meeting at Denmark Hill to raise money to help the widow of Thomas Seddon, the artist, who had been a great friend of Brown's: "Ruskin was playful & childish & the tea table overcharged with cakes and sweets as for a juvenile party. After this, about an hour later, wine and wine was again produced of which R. again partook largely, reaching out his thin paw & swiftly absorbing or 4 large lumps of cake to succour."

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He was continually quarrelling with Emma now, either over her extravagance or the bouts of drinking lessons he had to deliver. "I have been her weakness", in "The Last of England" the wife's face is faithfully copied from Emma (it had taken four weeks to paint the ribbon of her bonnet); she looks pensive but trusting whereas he expresses on the husband's face a self-portrait, is despairing. An eminent architect once wrote that when a man's profession fails, his wife may weep but the man bleeds. Brown had bled and died; in consequence he had become touchy and cantankerous, and even at the worst times could forget his misery in the joy of creation. "Whenever I set to designing I feel in the most ethereal and exalted state possible. I do not hurry with it because it is such enjoyment."

In October 1854, Rossetti came to stay to offer to paint the calf in his picture "Drooping", and remained six weeks. On December 17, Brown was writing that Rossetti seemed



A pencil and watercolour portrait of Ford Madox Brown by Milnis, signed in monogram and dated 1853. In that year Brown ceased to exhibit at the Royal Academy while Milnis, with whom he had on uneasy relationship, was elected as an Associate Member: it was also the year that marked the beginning of the break up of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. The picture is taken from Pre-Raphaelite Portraits by Andrea Rose (144pp, with over 100 black-and-white illustrations. The Oxford Illustrated Press, £9.95, paperback £6.95, 0 92280 74 0) which also contains Brown's portrait of his first wife Elizabeth and their daughter Lucy, his study of his second wife Emma for "The Last of England" and an oil painting of his son Oliver aged five entitled "The English Boy".

must have been hard indeed to live with. As he twice lamented, "An unsuccessful man is a bore to everyone." That he was a migraine sufferer will be apparent to all fellow-sufferers who read the description of his symptoms on page 172.

His fortunes began to improve when in 1855 he sold "The Last of England" for £150 to a dealer, and the following year he was awarded the £50 annual prize by the Liverpool Academy of Arts for "Christ Washing Peter's Feet". The Browns moved twice in the next ten years and, in 1866, took a house in Fitzroy Square. Here the diary ends. It is pleasant to learn that they remained there for ten years, comfortably prosperous and creating a centre for men of art and letters.

Brown suffered a crushing blow when Nilly died of blood poisoning at the age of nineteen. So brilliant was this young man; both an artist and writer, that he warranted an entry of his own in the DNB. Emma died in 1890 and Brown just three years later. His work today is so

appreciated that a smallish and unpleasant portrait of Emma dated 1869-84 and entitled "May Memories" fetched £38,000 at Christie's last year.

Parts of the diary have been published before with omissions, changes of phrasing and spelling. In this complete edition Brown's "eccentric spelling" has been retained, which adds greatly to the charm of his writing. He owned that he never could master spelling; indeed he despised all writing and seems to have kept his diary merely as a duty to posterity. Virginia Surtees's annotations are exemplary. She has the great gift of communicating the excitement of her researches to the reader so that her scholarship is always unobtrusive. And her notes are where they ought to be - at the bottom of the page. My one quarrel with this fascinating and important book is that the muddy process by which the admirably chosen illustrations are reproduced, makes it impossible to distinguish the background figures in Brown's pictures.

Inside story

By Jeremy Cooper

SUSAN LASDUN
Victorians at Home
With an Introduction by Mark Girouard
160pp. Waldenfeld and Nicolson. £9.95.
0 297 77942 7

One of the pleasures of *Victorians at Home* is that the book does not pretend to be anything more than it is - an intelligent but brief description of selected aspects of Victorian family life as revealed in a series of chapters. Each of the twenty-one chapters, with the exception of "Queen Victoria", is devoted to a single house, and the text varies in length according to the amount of documentary information connected with the drawings. One of the longer chapters, "John Hardin", runs to no more than six short pages in which Hardin's Journal of the 1820s is called upon to interpret his own delirious watercolours. And the shortest

chapter, a single paragraph of text and four drawings with captions, is entitled "An Unknown House". The interest of this attractively designed book therefore lies primarily in the illustrations, many of which are previously unpublished.

As *Victorians at Home* has no academic pretensions and is highly selective, one wonders why the publishers decided it was necessary to enlist the aid of a heavyweight, Mark Girouard, to write a native-page introduction. Girouard and Lasdun are writers of a different nature and they work badly together, to Girouard's disadvantage. Nowhere in the author's careful captions to the illustrations are generalizations allowed the unfettered freedom they find in Girouard's introduction - "the whole of Jane Austen seems encapsulated in one little drawing", is a particularly embarrassing example, the watercolours are pleasing, works of art at their own level yet do not claim creative comparison with *Pride and Prejudice*. In the same way, *Victorians at Home* has certain qualities but it would be unfair to compare it with Girouard's own *Life in the English Country House*.

UPP 0301250

Headnote	Wordsworth	Headnote to "A Cento" (Yarrow Ravished)
1	Tennyson	<i>The Princess</i> , VII 161a
2	Byron	"Monody on Sheridan"
3	Gray	<i>Elegy</i> , 5
4	Arnold	<i>Thyrsis</i> , 198
5	Shelley	"The Question", 18
6	Thomson	<i>Autumn</i> , 731
7	Parnell	<i>The Hermit</i> , 80
8	Tennyson	<i>Thionis</i> , 1
1	Arnold	<i>Thyrsis</i> , 161
2	Pope	<i>Essay on Man</i> , I 102
3	Falconer	<i>The Shipwreck</i> , II 84
4	Shakespeare	<i>Sonnet</i> , 72
5	Pope	<i>Sonnet</i> , 17
6	Crabbe	<i>The Borough</i> , I 250
7	Arnold	<i>Thyrsis</i> , 37
1	Shakespeare	<i>Sonnet</i> , 103
2	Pope	<i>The Rape of the Lock</i> , V 51
3	Spenser	<i>The Faerie Queene</i> , VII vii 2
4	Shakespeare	<i>Hamlet</i> , V 1 220
5	Shelley	<i>Adonais</i> , 34
6	Hardy	<i>The Dynasts</i> , III vii 9
7	Dryden	<i>MacFlecknoe</i> , 2
1	Goldsmith	<i>The Traveller</i> , 159
2	Pope	<i>Dunciad</i> , III 94
3	Byron	<i>Child Harold</i> , IV clxxxi
Footnote	Johnson	Preface to <i>Shakespeare</i>

In the theological zoo

By Redmond O'Hanlon

HERBERT FRIEDMANN:

A Bestiary for Saint Jerome
Animal Symbolism in European
Religious Art
379pp. Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press. Distributed by
Europarc, £21.
87474 446 6

This is the kind of book which Swann miraculously released from all the intervening inner Proustian weaknesses which preclude such an achievement, might have written. Herbert Friedmann's inquiries have been multitudinous, his labours long, and his pursuit of portraits of Saint Jerome has not been limited to manuscript illuminations in the margins of the leaves of precious folios but has extended to paintings, sculptures, drawings, woodcuts, etchings, engravings, and tapestries in all the known collections in Europe and across America. Tens of thousands of unidentified or only shadow-concealed animals from their former obscurities, he has re-united the Saint with his old companions and re-endowed them with their lost significance. And his magnificent work is redolent of Proust's idealized image, in his 1906 essay *On Reading*, of the peaceful intensities of scholarship, not just because it is highly original and, equally, persuasive, lavishly illustrated with high-quality colour plates and a great number of black and white images, filled with a sub-text of almost continuous footnotes unrolling down the sides of the clearly printed pages, but also because St Jerome himself was for so many centuries the chief maker of that image, the great exemplar of the life of true scholarship.

We have only to think of Colantonio's Naples masterpiece - Jerome in his small quiet study surrounded by all the familiar talismans for his mind's journey: the hour-glass, the candle, a pair of scissors, his quills, his papers and his massive leather-bound, clasped and adorned books strewn across his shelves; while he himself has pushed his chair back from the incline of his desk, a momentary respite from his heroic literary labours, in order to attend to his equally heroic companion who is troubled by a thorn in his foot. It has always seemed appropriate that while lesser scholars have to make do with a mere common cat curled up by the fireside, the single-handed translator of the Bible from Greek and Hebrew into Latin, the creator of the Vulgate, should be equipped with a lion.

But Jerome's life had not always been so settled. Born about 341 AD in Strido, a town on the border of Dalmatia, he spent his youth in passionate study of classical Roman literature, broken by serious illness in 373, after which he suffered all the torments of a spiritual crisis, renouncing pagan scholarship, decided to devote himself to the Holy Scriptures. He retired to the desert of Chalcis in Syria and, for four years, lived there as a hermit, alternately mortifying himself and, presumably, reading quietly in the shade. He was then ordained at Antioch and spent the rest of his life working upon his great translation, teaching, writing, and vigorously engaging in every theological controversy until his death in a monastery in Bethlehem in 420.

Legend, through some sensible creative confusion with Cerasinus who, as a saintly old monk, was plainly unworthy of his genuine companion, later awarded Jerome his lion. But it also presented him with a whole host of bestialities, and it is the penumbra of complicated and often bizarre meanings which surround each lizard, or magpie, or gallinule, or heron, or harpy that Friedmann, a former professor at the University of California at Los Angeles, has brought to the history of art so brilliantly clarified.

Giovanni Andrea, professor of canon law at Bologna in the first half of the fourteenth century, depicted Jerome in his study, surrounded by

Jerome legend, and in so doing he gave the artists of the later Middle Ages one of their few opportunities to study natural history and accurately to depict a wide range of animals in church art. Indeed, it is difficult to imagine the early descriptive phases of biology itself arising without some such sanctioned, antecedent, pictorialized interest in animals and plants.

From these beginnings Friedmann first follows, in a general way, the development in art of the Jerome story, mapping the different fortunes of the two clearly defined themes, the saint as scholar and as penitent, through time and across Europe. As the Middle Ages come to an end and the Renaissance begins, Jerome, as a man of learning and wisdom, is emphasized, the unofficial patron of the humanists, serene in his study; but the Baroque world, enervated by the legend of his years of suffering and self-acquisition, and portraying his central nightmare, when, whipped by the angels before the throne of God he heard the terrible words "You are not a Christian but a Ciceronian" (Friedmann assures us, however, that years afterwards Jerome was still writing "pure, even idiomatic, Latin, and he could not restrain himself from embellishing his sentences with frequent quotations from his former idol, Cicero.")

"We then come to the heart of Friedmann's massively documented and well-written book, his detailed discussions of Dürer's great engraving of 1514, 'Saint Jerome in His Study' (the dutiful, clear account, Lucas Cranach the Elder's slight versions of Saint Jerome (the theologian and springs to life), Bosch's Ghent and Venice pictures (fascinated but half-baffled), Antonello da Messina's 'Saint Jerome in His Study' in the National Gallery (respectful), Francesco di Giorgio's bronze relief of 'St Jerome in Penitence' (a partially rewarded straining of his eyes and quill-creativity) and Cosimo Tura's 'Saint Jerome in Penitence' and 'Christ Crucified' which were originally one painting (moments of justified wild excitement).

Friedmann's explanations are carefully controlled and systematic, and his argument relies on his effect upon a long series of small correspondences, which command our assent, but here are a few examples of his method. Why, for instance, is a little dog lying asleep beside the lion in the foreground of Jerome's northern burlesque study in Dürer's 1514 picture? Dürer was an admirer of Luther, Friedmann reminds us, but he was also a member of the Nuremberg group of humanists, and Luther had sharply criticized Jerome for his love of pre-Christian writers. In 1514, however, Dürer still hoped for reconciliation within the Church, which is why dog and lion (not quite so tame, as it is true), fidelity and courage, can still lie down and sleep beside each other in the evening peace of the scholar's room. How very different is Dürer's circa 1521 pen drawing of the penitent 'Saint Jerome in His Study', executed after his full conversion to Luther.

teachings, where a skeletal, anxious old man stares into the sockets of the skull his own head has almost become, remorseful for the now forbidden imaginings of his joyous literary youth.

Or - a representative problem of a different sort - just what is a prominent fat beaver doing on the floor of Jerome's study in Lucas Cranach the Elder's marvelous 1526 painting? Well, idiosyncrasies of this order in his subjects hardly ever occasion a change in Friedmann's pace. Cranach, sometime Burgomaster of Wittenberg, was an apothecary practicing in the city and would have known all about the value of "castoreum," a modicum made from the glands of the beaver, and which was presumably intended to produce a state of mind and body opposite to that symbolized by the beaver itself: spiritual peace attained by the conquest and annihilation of carnal desire. This meaning was itself derived from the legendary behaviour of the hunted beaver - when hard pressed it was believed to castrate itself and thereby released for higher things, to build undistracted dams in heavenly ponds.

Antonello da Messina's extraordinarily peaceful 'St Jerome in His Study' in the National Gallery, Friedmann points out, is serene in its symbolic details as well as in its overall effect. Not only are there no unsettling reminders of transience - no skull, no hour-glass - but even the peacock's train (Pride and Vanity) is shut, and the bird is therefore displaying its secondary significance, immortality (because it was thought so tough to eat it might well be indestructible); and here the peacock, a Red-legged or French partridge (see catalogue), unlike the English partridge, it declines to get up and be shot like a gentleman but prefers to desert down the nearest ditch) appears not to be a symbol of Satan (it was thought to have snatched the eggs of other birds which laid themselves) but one (favoured by Antonello's contemporary, Leonardo) of the Eventual Triumph of Truth, because on batching, the young birds were thought to return to their true mother.

But such virtuosity pales beside Friedmann's original detection in his commentary on Cosimo Tura's 'Saint Jerome in Penitence' (1490-95), a sophisticated artist, particularly delighted in allegory, is a kindred spirit for Friedmann, who in turn rakes the fine nuances of his extra-whitened, religiously wise barn-owl, his penitent lion and his frog. But the *pièce de résistance* is the fourth and last creature that Tura introduced into this painting - one of exceeding rarity in religious art, not only to the art of Renaissance Italy, but of all Europe. On a hand side of the great black tree trunk the contorted leafy away behind Jerome, and mistakenly identified by all previous art historians, here perches the soft-grey-backed, white-throated, bright-red-winged, butterfly bird, the small frequenter



St Jerome in his cell: a woodcut by Albrecht Dürer.

of Northern European rock faces (and, occasionally, stone walls) from whose crevices it wheedles grubs and insects with its long bill; the Wall Creeper. Tura has painted it in winter plumage, and it is only in winter that he might hope to see it in his area of Italy - and with what extraneous message? Yes, there was "an old belief," Friedmann writes, "still current at least as late as the middle of the eighteenth century, to the effect that the wall creeper inhabited old and neglected cemeteries, and that it frequently laid its eggs and raised its young in human skulls." So the fluttering wings of the butterfly, in search of flies and ants across the weathered cracks of the tombstones to country move, become an annual reminder of hope and Resurrection.

The text abounds, too, in other incidental pleasures: Duke Alfonso I of Este will be sending a messenger to ask Titian to paint a gazelle which he is unable to travel to see for himself; or, Federico Gonzaga, Duke of Mantua, will be reprimanded for the muddled biology of legend implicit in his motto of a lizard (it should have

been a salamander) in the midst of flames and with the words "Quod Hinc Deest, Me Torquet" ("What this one [the lizard] lacks or knows not [ie, the consuming flames of amoris fire] torments me"); a statement based on Aristotle's comment that the lizard is cold by nature. And in the ceaseless succession of illustrations large and small there is always a keen to pursue Jerome's lion - whose depiction varies from an excellent accurate enough to accompany a zoological society monograph, to lions with faces like sheep, ears like a spaniel, legs like a wolf, tails long enough to lasso prey from a sitting position - right down to the Boleleion MS. Astor A. 17, f. 153 French 1500-1525 lion, where the artist has plainly forced his abbot to his knees, backscratched his long remaining hairs, applied the cat's paw, and then knotted him round the neck with the order's tea-cosy.

There are also minor technical pleasures - a lucidly cross-referenced Bestiary; an alphabetical list by artist of eleven hundred works in which Jerome is depicted, with an indication of subject and medium and where they may now be found; a bibliography in every way worthy of the scholar it honours, and a clear index.

But Friedmann's greatest achievement in this original and important book is the painstaking guidance he is able to afford us, for a short way, into the chaos of bizarre correspondences, the medieval logical hallucinations, the contorted ineptitudes twisting external nature into interior fantastic significance and back again; the multiple and constant pre-Romantic projection of desires and reassurances and self-warnings into the indifferent plant and animal kingdoms to make them partake of the spiritual. And in Bosch, the merest intensity of literalism, the pedantically correct verbal playing of his pictorial images, the logical and sequential commentary - on legend and scripture - say, the sleeping dog and the nearby cockerel (fraud and deceit) by the poplars where the cuckoo (or, going on to alchemic base) beside a family of widows (Panofsky's duck and so a symbol of the vanity of earthly effort) near a tree trunk where also the challenge of chastity (and all in a very small section at the bottom of the Ghent 'St Jerome in Penitence') - merely makes visually plain how dreamlike such logic was. A genuine surrealism transfigures all the visible world into pure totems, relieving us of the tedious of empiricism, filling the fields with personal messages.

D. J. Enright

Pictures of Hell

Domination over fish and fowl, and then the cure of the lower world gave him human features. The damned were required to run about bare, in endless copulation, their parts of torture.

Man later decreed that even lost souls should be chastely encased in breeding cockle shells. Deprived of love, the phoenix's only amenity. The damned ran about in endless fetters.

Time passed, and man looked this prurient notion. The damned were stripped of their kinkers and breeches. Scholars preach of fire and ice to quellation. Such metaphors for the upper classes.

In the pursuit of the pristine

By Edward Norman

NICHOLAS LASH:

A Matter of Hope
A Theologian's Reflections on the
Thought of Karl Marx
312pp. Darton, Loogan and Todd.
£14.95.
0 232 51494 1

Disillusionment begins at home. The contrast between the institutional Christianity of their own day, and what Christians suppose it might have been, has in every age inspired some to return to what they imagine is the original and authentic Christ, to the unadorned truth. Wise men are not alarmed by the historical, corrupt, they know that men are capable of bringing the most noble ideals into dreadful disrespect through their own inherent imperfection - they know that you cannot judge the truth or virtue of a tradition by its exponents. It is only men in themselves, as individuals, who are known by their fruits and can be judged accordingly. In the doctrine of Original Sin they have a clear explanation of the shambles in the temple: it is a truly humane doctrine, for it recognizes the fallibility of all, the inevitability of a gulf between ideals and behaviour.

The Marxists have no such doctrine of Human Nature to hand; theirs is a creed derived from optimism about men and their autonomous capabilities. Yet they have the same practical difficulty as the Christians. Around them they behold the consequences of the application of their ideas, and they are not always pleased. They are considered to be a shade too harsh, its practical effects recognizable in the herding of crypto-liberals into prison for the expression of opinion. Less philosophically rigorous representations of institutionalized Marxism are wanting in other ways: they are held to be derivatives of incorrect understandings of the founder's opinions, or "ideological" errors insinuating itself into the Word. As with the disenchanted Christian puritan, however, Marxists can't let go of the bone, and they gnaw away until the marrow trickles out. They return, that is to say, to Marx himself - as the worried Christians return to Christ - in the belief that, properly interpreted, the "real" originator will disclose the pristine splendours. Nicholas Lash appears to belong to both categories.

A Matter of Hope is an intellectually entertaining book. It has the merit of treating Marx seriously, and of showing how far Christian writers have been able to do - not because they have all been fearful reactionaries, but because their intellectual equipment has ill-prepared them for the task. Most of the influential figures in the "Christian-Marxist" dialogue of the early 1970s were, on the "Christian" side at least, capable of evaluating Marxist theory only at the level of what is called, in the trade, "vulgar Marxism." Professor Lash, as would be expected from a Cambridge Professor of Divinity and an ex-priest of the Catholic Church, has written a book at the appropriate intellectual level, and his discussion of Marx's ideas makes a valuable contribution to contemporary theological discourse. For a Christian reader seeking a careful analysis of selected aspects of Marx's thought, the present study has immediate utility.

Doubts begin almost at once, however, about the claim, made in several places, that the book is about Marx and not about the Marxists - not on Marx, but on the thought of Karl Marx. It is stated very plainly. Aware of course, of the hazards of separating the teacher from the schools he inspired, Professor Lash has nevertheless written a book that is largely about the Marxists. The way with theologians, an enormous amount of his text consists of direct quotation from quotations. Almost all of these are actually Marxist intellectuals. There are a

many references to E. P. Thompson, for example, as there are either to Engels or to Feuerbach. How is it possible to separate the original mind from the living and enduring tradition which transmits its genius? When it comes to Christianity, Lash is quite clear that it is impossible. Christianity, he declares, in agreement with Marx, "has no content of its own" - it is, "or should be, the content" of politics, ethics and art; of law, economics, and physics. To an equation of Christianity with human moral seriousness, he goes on to say: "It is the 'content' of whatever it is that constitutes the 'project' of human existence in the world of nature."

With Marx, on the other hand, Lash is sure. The content can be known and has a substance quite unlike some of the disagreeable totalitarian structures that have claimed its authority. (Lenin is in one place characterized, in contrast to Marx, by his "crude simplicities.") The formative Marxists, furthermore, were unaware of Marx's early writings - in which he discusses religion, even if rather sparingly - since most of these were not published until the middle years of the present century. The "real" Marx has yet to be discovered. Lash lays out his treasure map. And what golden goodies await discovery! While admitting some "important contradictions or unresolved tensions" in Marx's thought, he is hugely impressed by its "richness." It has "a fundamental coherence, an internal consistency." It is even, astonishingly, to be compared with the thought of Newman - about which Professor Lash has, of course, written a distinguished book. There was, in that study of Newman's *Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*, the same qualities found in this new work: a sort of open dialogue with the reader, an over-complication of ideas which in themselves were lucidly rendered by the authors being studied, and a curious sense that the writer is persuading himself as he goes along.

With Marx the result is much more selective than with Newman. Professor Lash is sceptical of the sharp division, made by orthodox Marxists, between the writings of the young Marx, with their "idealist" remnants, and the later works. This is necessary for his thesis. If the mature Marx, with his harsh positivism, really does prove to be inseparable from the young writer who still thought it worth mentioning religion occasionally (if only to dismiss it), then the whole operation becomes, as you might say, a matter of hope. Lash also has the advantage of not believing that Marx's predictions falsified his theories because they were disproved. "The dashing of Marx's hopes," he writes, "is an indication not so much of a flaw in his theoretical analysis, but rather of the extent to which his optimism was unfounded." The reader cannot but be reminded of those early Christians in the deserts of North Africa who came upon a consecrated Host in a Church wrecked some time before by the Vandals: the mildewed decay they thought they saw upon it was not really there - it was just their feeble senses that led them astray.

It is a serious weakness of Lash's outlook that the Marx he knows is derived from the writings of ethical theorists and philosophers, that he concentrates on those texts which they found illuminating, and that he is evidently very little acquainted with Marx's economic and political writings - with the main body of his writing, in fact. This is clear, for example, in his lack of interest in Marx's critique of Political Economy. It hardly gets discussed at all, and the reader is left with the impression, perhaps unjustifiably, that Lash's perception of what the Political Economists were talking about rather corresponds to the simple model devised by their opponents. Similarly, there is scant reference to the problem of necessity: of why, and how logically, Marx connected his critique of social reality to the dynamics of inexorable social trans-

formation. Both are matters which have attracted an enormous volume of scholarly writing by experts in Political Science. Lash, to do him justice, does declare that his reading of Marx has been "eclectic," and of Marx's Marx, "scattered." He says: "I am not an expert either on Marx or on Marxism, and am therefore not equipped to undertake a scholarly examination either of the movement or of the thought of the man from whom the movement takes its name." What, then, of the theological side of the book?

Here Lash is certainly very expert. The theological attitudes brought to bear upon Marx's thought readily emerge as the most responsible of the sort of theological speculation common enough in the past two decades. The edifice of contemporary theology, as everybody knows, is a *troupe* of gigantic proportions. In Lash it is a *troupe* of giants, most of them to be found, and in an intelligent form. "It is not the theologian's business to tell other people what, or how, to believe," he writes, the trouble with so much existing theology is that it discloses "the dangerous illusion" that "it possesses its truth." There can be no dogmatic theology that is not merely a reflection in using language about God (or, sometimes, as he writes, "God") for both practical and theoretical reasons: "any form of Christian belief, or any system of Christian theology, which supposes itself to be in possession of ready-made theoretical 'solutions' to this twofold dilemma has thereby demonstrated its 'idealist' character." It just is not possible to name God: "but it does not follow that the reality of that which we cannot appropriately name is not there to be experienced - not in 'religion' alone, for religion has no content of its own but in the givenness of all responsibility. But it's all very difficult. The reader

is left with the implication that Marx's early dismissal of religion was itself inconsistent with other aspects of his mighty analysis. "Unfortunately, his criticism of Christianity as necessarily 'idealist' did not sufficiently conform to his own criteria of materialist method." He "supposed himself entitled, on the basis of philosophical discourse, and of his experience of the particular historical form of Christianity, to make general assertions concerning the necessarily idealist nature and ideological social function of Christianity." Now that rather lets the cat out of the bag, for there are wide implications for the rest of Marx's thinking. Of which other parts of the structure of his thought may that not also be said? It is not Marx who is among "the forces that shape our culture and our society" - the forces whose moral seriousness originally impelled Professor Lash to suppose that Christianity must respond to them. It is the Marxists, those whom he has decided to side-step, who produced them. The seamless robe of intellectual purity has once again fallen into a puddle. But the Marxists had better look out. Having wrecked Christianity, the theologians are beginning to get to work on them now. There won't be much left when they have finished.

The grounds for now been prepared for Lash's contribution to the religiously-minded Marx's thought with Christianity. Christianity, for its part, is "not religion," and indeed it seeks to abolish religion because it is "superfluous of its own anthropomorphism." Properly regarded, Christianity is a version of materialism. Marx, on the other hand, though an atheist, was not a materialist in the vulgar sense - because he attacked money and possessions, at least those belonging to other members of the bourgeoisie - nor in the usually understood philosophical sense. "Religious materialism" is a description which may be applied to the vision both of Christ and of Marx - though qualifications and limitations of use are rushed on quickly, before the reader has a chance to gasp. A suspicion of double standards hovers around Lash's assessments of Christians and Marxists. The former are always being nagged about their failure to perceive the "real" nature of their faith, for allowing it to support social oppression; but we do not detect anywhere a hint that Marx might have been a tedious creep, whose bourgeois life-style and personal relationships were a burden to all around him. The Marxist writers are treated with reverence, though some of their ideas are criticized; the Christian theologians are mostly dismissed as "ideological" and "barbaric" discussed.

There is further inconsistency in this regard. Having said very little about Marx's political philosophy or economic theory, Lash goes on to give a version of Christianity that is deeply political. Theological criticism, he writes, unless it is "socially and economically critical, is inadequately grounded." The concepts of "sin" and "redemption" must be seen as "eminently historical concepts," and not mere moral categories. Unless the Church takes steps of a political character, it will be "helping to perpetuate existing structures of humanity and oppression." Christian "hope" he insists in another place, is "inherently political." There is no "doubt," he says "but that Christian-

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be very painful and the procedure ripe for compassionate tiding-up.

Sex is much more complicated; and here as elsewhere Mr Gathorne-Hardy has put a great deal of effort into his compilation. And that is precisely the trouble. He is at his best when getting rid of the pompous (Shere Hite's *Report* on the importance of, necessity for, and means of achieving, largely without the intervention of men, female enjoyment by women), gently deflating the melodramatic (Neil Dunn's description of Christmas in the country, with her lover Dan, her husband, her husband's girlfriend, Dan's wife, his wife's boyfriend and the kids... "kippers for Christmas dinner and lots of wine - it should have been fun and yet it wasn't"; to which Mr Gathorne-Hardy observes, "... it could have been the kippers...") and pouncing on the revealing expression ("Involved with" described as "absolutely typical post-crack-up phrase").

Sadly, he is not satisfied with making mince out of "self-help books, sex therapists and promoters of communes"; he has tried to write a serious tome and, in doing so, he has become as ponderous as his sources. He invents irritating catchphrases: the "Privilege Bug" for the generation born between the late 1920s and the 1940s, the "rogue gene" and the "inset beam of change" of increasing divorce, and so on. Some of these

are impossible to explain - "the fellacy of the rigid swing" for instance - because they are no more than labels stuck on half-baked ideas. Sometimes we are completely baffled and Mr Gathorne-Hardy's convoluted prose does not help. What, for example, are we to make of this: "I talked to a man of forty-two who had two women alternately week by week and he said he had been forced to have two orgasms a night every night for eleven months"? The mathematics are extremely confused.

Nor is it easy to follow an argument that consists of erecting straw men, topping them and then standing atop them again, especially when we cannot be sure whether the straw men have emerged from the texts which the author cites or whether he has fabricated them himself. Take, for example, his discussion of Professor Edmund Leach's observation that a secure and stable family is a necessary condition for the efficient transmission of values and customs and of Dr Jack Dominian's belief that "the welfare of societies and nations depends on the well-being of the individual marriage and family". Mr Gathorne-Hardy uses these references to demolish the assumptions that a) the Roman Empire collapsed because stable family life collapsed and b) that the Western world will go the same way for the same reasons. But are those his assumptions or those of Leach and Dominian? He certainly does not deter-

mine that Leach and Dominian have made any such statements.

It is not so much the small slips ("practise" is relentlessly spelled thus; names are misspelt) that make us wary of this book's claims to scholarship but a pervasive sleepiness of argument. There is too much seeing the past in terms of the present (the word "contemporary" is used to mean "now"), and too much innuendo ("typically, more is known about that in the 17th century than is known today"). The mere earnest Mr Gathorne-Hardy shows himself to be (all that laborious reading and all those appendices, the adjustment of tables and the conversion of prices - an evening at Plate's Retreat, a New York partouze, costs \$25 or £10.42), the mere uncomfortable he becomes, so that by the end of his book we cannot take him seriously any longer. "Civilization [is] unconsciously patterning itself in meat some of the most basic human beings are reaching for 'unconscious potentiality' in sexual matters as in everything else," says Mr Gathorne-Hardy, throwing in references to extra-sensory perception, rightward swings in general elections, etc. The exhausted reader knows that Mr Gathorne-Hardy hasn't proved anything and that he can go on and on like this for pages more. Just as people do, in fact, when they are discussing private woes and their cosmic implications. Not, then, a book for Christmas or anything but a profoundly depressing New Year.



"Would you pass the conversation please?" remarks the Calverton to the Cahan in one of the cartoons in *How about a little quarrel before bed?* (Unnumbered pages. Methuen. £2.50. 0 413 48830 6) which shows that the cartoonist has lost none of his brilliance at capturing the comic nuances in the bitter-sweet exchanges of the battle of the sexes. Here he gives expression to another paradox in the life of the couple.

Mark Twain and his 'English' novels

By Marcus Cunliffe

Samuel L. Clemens (or "see Mark Twain") in the way that indexes and encyclopaedias shunt us to the more famous pen-name) was born in 1835 and died in 1910. It is generally felt that Twain's best work was done in his forties and fifties, ranging from *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (1876) to *The Tragedy of Pudd'nhead Wilson* (1894), with *Life on the Mississippi* (1883) and *Huckleberry Finn* (1884) probably the central summits of his achievement. Sam Clemens quit Hannibal, Missouri, because he was a grown man, and later on went back there only to gather notes for the autobiographical *Life on the Mississippi*. By then he was a well-established resident of New England, living in Hartford, Connecticut, in prosperous proximity to such other celebrities as Harriet Beecher Stowe. However, it is also generally assumed that Twain was a profoundly American writer, drawing his truest inspiration from the great Mississippi Valley of boyhood and youth - the realm of his remembered, in-most heartland.

If this is so, how are we to deal with what might be called his two "English" novels? *The Prince and the Pauper* was published in December 1881. A *Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* came out eight years after, at the end of 1889. They thus belong chronologically to Twain's most productive period. Do they belong to mere important respects? In any case, are they a closely related pair? Several answers - not necessarily cogent one with another - have been offered by critics and biographers. These can be summarized, then a few more may be added.

The first argument is that the further Twain departed from America, in time, space and theme, the less sure was his touch. *The Prince and the Pauper* and *A Connecticut Yankee* were set not merely in England but in the past, one in the mid-thirteenth century and the other in a semi-mythical Arthurian kingdom of around 600 A.D. Twain liked to read about the past, whether in the Waverley novels of Sir Walter Scott, the diary of Samuel Pepys or Thomas Carlyle's illuminations in *The French Revolution*. He loved to read English history, looking for local colour and for clues to how people actually spoke. But he was not a historian by instinct. Precise accuracy was unimportant to him. Sometimes he attributed to one era behaviour he knew of in connection with a different period. He defended himself by arguing that if the behaviour (usually brutal) had been a feature of a later, supposedly more civilized time, there was reasonable to infer that such conduct existed earlier.

Twain scholars are apt to brush aside *The Prince and the Pauper*. They may grant that the novel is tighter in construction and more consistent in tone than much of Twain's fiction, including *A Connecticut Yankee*. Otherwise, they tend to classify it with *The Personal Recollections of Joan of Arc* (1896), a subsequent venture into his deepest concerns. *The Prince and the Pauper* is a less view not "American" of it too obviously so to carry Twain's name. We are told that Twain begged him to put his talents to higher use than mere slapstick, and indeed endeavored to present a reasonably authentic picture of the reign of Henry VIII and Henry's half-brother, Edward VI, imparting (to the "boy" of the subtitle) the moral lessons of "young people of all ages". The publication date fitted in with the Christmas gift season. The "historical" narrative style Twain concocted was almost free from Americanisms. He considered publishing the book anonymously; and a reviewer in the *Atlantic* even, it is fact remarked, that "not a critical expert" would attribute *The Prince and the Pauper* to Mark Twain. "If his name were withheld from the title-page," Twain did say in *Joan of Arc*, introducing it as a *Harper's* magazine serial with his own authority concealed.

to deny an essential identity.

The *Connecticut Yankee* has been far more thoroughly worked over by critics, yet often with the intent to touch. The London *Spectator* disparaged the novel on publication in 1889 as "coarse and clumsy". An Edinburgh newspaper said it was "a lecture in disguise of monarchical institutions and religious establishments, and in praise of Yankee cuteness and Wall Street chicanery as compared to the simple fidelity... of the knightly ideal". Though such dismissals have been commoner in Britain than in the United States, we can trace a recurrent notion that when Twain strayed too far from home, literally, he lost his way.

A second approach is to maintain that while the *Yankee* is a considerably more interesting work, both novels fit perfectly well into the Twain canon. *The Prince and the*

essentially identical to the exploitative entrepreneur of nineteenth-century Britain or America. Certainly the parallels with his modern world were specified, to Twain's heavy approval, in the illustrations supplied by the American artist Dan Beard for the first edition. (Tennysen, the Peet Laureate, and author of the Arthurian *Idylls of the King*, appeared as the wizard Merlin. The American "robber baron" Jay Gould was caricatured as a medieval slaver-master.)

Much of this commentary is concerned with the complexities of Clemens/Twain. Henry Nash Smith and Justin Kaplan have analysed Twain's increasing difficulty in accepting any book. *The Prince and the Pauper* was four interrupted years in the making. A *Connecticut Yankee* involved a still more distracted struggle. Twain was preoccupied with the Paige typesetting machine, in which he staked his and his wife's resources

quit the war, seceding from the seceders, he in hindsight called his decision wise, the United States being the "sole country nameable in history as a tradition where a man is a man and manhood the only royalty". The democratic ethos is obviously a major element in *A Connecticut Yankee*. In the book, Twain's farcical-horrible "battle"-memory is reversed, becoming a conflict between the modern Union and the feudal Confederacy of aristocracy-and-Church.

The blend of criticism and biography has been a conspicuous feature of Twain scholarship. Not surprisingly, his writing is, to a degree unusual among authors, personal in tone and at least implicitly autobiographical. Twain's unevenness, his abrupt shifts of plot, the jump from joke to sobriety, and from one level of humour to another, prompt us to seek explanations in the contradictions of Clemens

wish we had some of England's reverence for the old and great."

Not long afterward, in 1875, Twain contributed an anonymous satire, "The Curious Republic of Gondour", to the *Atlantic Monthly*. The essay amounted to a condemnation of American-type universal suffrage, and a definite preference for a society graded through education and traditional wealth like that of Britain. In his imaginary paradise of Gondour, every citizen had one basic vote. But a person could receive up to nine votes; the additions were reckoned on an ascending scale of educational attainment plus affluence. In a letter of 1877 Twain, probably without any tinge of irony, asserted that "Republican Government, with a sharply restricted suffrage, is just as good as a Constitutional monarchy with a virtuous and powerful aristocracy; but with an unrestricted suffrage it ought to... perish because it is founded in wrong & it is weak & bad & tyrannical".

By 1881, when he finished *The Prince and the Pauper*, Twain's estimate of republican democracy was more favourable, at least by the cagative gauge of Reformation England. Edward as prince and monarch, hitherto utterly ignorant of the miseries of the poor, begins to learn only when thrown among beggars and thieves. The lesson takes a while to sink in: "Carve me this rabble to rags!" is his imperious cry on being rescued from a mob. Still, Edward does eventually realize that "kings should go to school to their own laws... and so learn mercy". All seems happily enough. Tom Canty the pauper and other worthy persons are properly rewarded for their loyal services. Though Edward VI died after only a few years on the throne, Twain concedes that his reign was "singularly merciful for those harsh times". Edward's courage is never doubted; nor are his innate intelligence and decency.

Anglophobia, we are told, was in the air during the 1880s in America. Twain's ambivalent judgments on rulers and ruled, elites and mobs, as signs of an innate dualism. Clemens/Twain was desecrated on one side of the family from the Lambtons - Earls of Durham who even up to his day professed a stoic attachment to visions of medieval chivalry. On the other side he claimed descent from a royal judge: a man associated with sending King Charles I to the scaffold in 1649.

This dualism has been shared by Howard B. Beethold (*Mark Twain and John Bull: The British Connection*) as an alternating dislike of and admiration for Great Britain; with admiration eventually coming out on top. Twain's final visit to England, to receive an honorary doctorate from Oxford University, was for him a marvellous accident; and it brought his Atlantic crossings to a grand total of thirty-one. The figure is a reminder that he was an enthusiastic traveller and that he often turned toward England. He stayed for several months in 1872, and again, twice in 1873-74. He toured the Continent in 1876-77, winding up with another English visit.

During the 1870s Twain was on the whole an emphatic Anglophile. What he cherished, and what he missed in his own country, was the honest efficiency of government, local and national, and the enduring appeal of tradition. During the 1870s Twain was an American friend, with lyric witfulness, of his emotion in gazing at Admiral Nelson's Victory, "that colossal and superb old ship, all beflagged... and his old head once more... God knows!"



The prince and the pauper - an illustration to the first edition of 1881.

Pauper can for example be shown to reveal the author's lifelong fascination with doubles, twins and reversed identities. The accidental exchange of roles between the boy-prince, England's future king, Edward VI, and Tom Canty, a lad from a London slum, anticipates the switching of *Pudd'nhead Wilson* of a light-skinned slave baby and a white infant. The reversal of fortunes that exposes Edward, Prince of Wales, to rags, to hunger and to danger, likewise anticipates the plight in *A Connecticut Yankee* of King Arthur, sold into slavery through error when he accompanies Hank Morgan on an incognito tour of his domain. "Boss" Morgan, former superintendent of the Colt arms factory in Hartford, is projected back into medieval England. Twain portrays him as the quintessential American - irreverent, jocular, shrewd and versatile. He may start out as a New England Yankee; yet as the book goes on, Morgan's skills reach out to embrace the West also; he proves to be a good horseman, a dead shot and a handy with a larrikin.

So *A Connecticut Yankee* can be thought of as a novel about Twain's America rather than about medieval England. That was the interpretation put forward by Twain's close friend, the critic-overseer William Dean Howells, reviewing *A Connecticut Yankee* with almost uncritical smugness. Twain's "arch-humourist", he Howells's words, transcended mere humour. "At every moment, the scene smokes, but it is all the time an object-lesson in democracy. It makes us glad of our republic and our epoch; but it does not flatter us into a fond content with them" - for, Howells suggested, the noble of King Arthur's day was known to be bad.

In the expectation that the perfected invention would revolutionize printing and bring him a vast fortune, the Paige machine, however, remained intricately imperfect. Its failure bankrupted Twain, forcing him to sell his Hartford home and live abroad in Europe during most of the 1890s. Hence, some biographers surmise, the gradual turn in *A Connecticut Yankee* from pride to nineteenth-century know-how to the grim finale of "The Battle of the Sand-Belt". Twenty-five thousand knights perish in vain assaults upon an electrified defence system manned by a handful of "Boss" Morgan's mechanics; but the Boss and his followers are themselves trapped and doomed inside their cave. The dream of progress, modernity goes awry; and the author's own fantasy of becoming a tycoon - greater than Jay Gould, on a par with the multimillionaire Andrew Carnegie, with whom Twain was delighted to be on first-name terms.

Justin Kaplan detects an additional link between the novel and its creator's experiences. In 1887, Twain dropped work on it temporarily to deliver a comic-confessional lecture to the Civil War veterans at the private History of a Campaign that was Twain's version of how for a few weeks in 1861 he and some Missouri acquaintances had formed a rebel or Confederate unit. A Tom Sawyerish prank, except that Sam Clemens was by then 25 years old, and that the gang shot an isolated stranger they mistook for the vainguard of a Union attack. In the lecture Twain facetiously referred to the killing as "the only battle in the history of the world where the opposing force was utterly exterminated... Having then decided to

In the picture

By John Naughton

TERRY FINCHER and TONY LYNCH: *The Fincher File* 197pp. Quarell. £11.95. 0 7043 2293 5

Photographers are notoriously inarticulate. There are exceptions, of course - one thinks of Edward Weston and Cecil Beaton - but, by and large, photographers' pictures have to speak for them. That this should be true for the major artists of the medium is perhaps not surprising. But it is somewhat astonishing that those who, like successful news photographers, have lived through and photographed the most horrible events of the century are so speechless about them.

Terry Fincher is a case in point. For a quarter of a century he has been everywhere the action was - Suez, Cyprus, the Arab-Israeli wars, Aden, Biafra, Vietnam. At home, he has photographed royalty, politicians, film stars and just about every other kind of celebrity. Now, at the age of fifty, he has published a volume of memoirs, the text of which is even with the ministrations of a professional writer, Tony Lynch - a remarkable only for its banality. Leaving home (and his young wife June) for the Suez invasion, for example, he recalls feeling

very proud of myself at that moment, but as I walked along windy Fleet Street, once more, I was already missing June and our cosy flat, and this feeling turned quickly to loneliness. However, I knew there was no turning back and my spirits had lifted again by the time I reached the War Office. In Whitehall, where I was officially sworn in as a war correspondent, next stop was London Airport.

Next stop was always London Airport. It seems so much so that the Fincher's home life was threatened by his job. The roving evidence of the war photographer took its inevitable toll. Fincher would be away for months, then home for a weekend, then off again. And there was another woman.

Returned to England from Aden in August with my personal problems still unresolved, I was still in love with both women and wanted to find a solution. The situation seemed bleak, but I did not give up. I tried to explain how the

graph the Maharishi Mahesh Yoga in India, whence he journeyed to cover a small war in Sikkim. From there, he went on to the Yom Kippur War, and then back to the bosom of his family - by which time the Other Woman had, it seems, mysteriously dropped out of sight, never to be mentioned again.

One brings this up, not out of a desire to dwell on Mr Fincher's private life but because it illustrates the fundamentally superficial nature of his account. For his aim is clearly to produce something more enduring than a set of captions to his often memorable photographs. But the text which purports to explain something of the man behind the camera rarely penetrates below the level attained by the ghosted memoirs of theatrical celebrities.

It could be, however, that the brittle superficiality of Fincher's account is significant, in the sense that it reveals not literary incompetence but something essential about his personality. There is a strong case for believing that successful news photographers must be people whose experiences do not sear them emotionally or intellectually. They must, in a sense, be blank slates on which the world writes and which will, however, and having written, go on. How otherwise could they do the kind of work they do? On evacuation from Xuan Lo in Vietnam, for example, Mr Fincher watched a small girl fall to her death from the rescue helicopter. The child's mother, who had witnessed this terrible accident, was weeping uncontrollably on the floor of the aircraft. Fincher, consummate professional that he is, photographed her and, having done so, turned on to the next assignment. The resulting photograph is, of course, "excellent" in the way that such photographs always are - striking, shocking, moving, sad. But one feels ashamed to look upon it. Many of Fincher's photographs are like that: an American GI weeps quietly in some corner of Vietnam; a starving Biafran child sucks frantically on a withered nipple; a distraught Egyptian woman runs screaming after a cart bearing the body of her dead son.

Mr Fincher is someone who can photograph such things one day, and the next photograph the actress Julie Ege in the nude, or Princess Margaret showing a bit of (elegant) leg, or London Zoo's Panda, and still sleep at night. The greatest deficiency of *The Fincher File* is that it does not attempt to explain how he

Christmas Incident

That season of good-will it was in some ways comely; Real snow had sealed us in the village this was peace To have no call to be distracted by a soul Snug with our families and nearest neighbours.

Our ritual gestures risked a laugh, our repetitions Tinkled like glass-hell baubles; silver shapes were padded With chocolate motor-cars; we hung the tannabaum With tinsel crystals; could not find the doll.

A girl was sick upstairs; before we could be merry We took our kisses and our conscience-heavy parcels To her oil-heated room; we could not understand The chill, we said, and wondered if we'd brought it.

Her bleached-pale hair, her grey undazzled face were still; It seemed she could not see or read our wrappings! The blunted, holly-garlands and our soap-sudged Mags! Were boring in the stare of her sad eyes.

When, later, we were asked to leave the feast to find her. (Saying we thought into her big advertisement To find it true) we doubted if she had pretended To be so foreign and so dumb and muddled.

It wasn't easy to believe her Christmas picture - Spoiled our pleasure to the glittering diamond day - The drifts of loneliness that leant against her heart, And sent her, quiet and cold, into the colder snow.

We tried her friend, a part-time chandler, obviously Shot for his Christmas. Just a fit of adolescence. Her bad jam empty. Well, her footsteps seem to go Towards the river, silly little creatures!

Soon we were searching for the lost and fellow searchers To tell each other she was safe and so were we From head-lines; they had found her at the candle-waxy pond Fishing for something; happy it seemed; exultant.

'And old the hook out what she wanted then, what was it? Her fingers Roze for the lost doll beneath the sugar frost. Not finding it she threw it there herself - to salt the stream! We passed the wool-flaked widows and the sprayed-so churches Embarrassed by the tritecess of her truth.

Children are not afraid of common oases or buried dollies; Her genuine story was as genuine as wheat-seed. The young ones have a gift for finding clichés. Fresh as the first attempt at ice in paradise; it was us grown-ups. Garbling her history with cotton-wool who drove her mad! Once she had found the thing she threw it back for sanity and keeps.

Jane Freeman

hood (mostly symbolized by Merlio) that is both credulous and unscrupulous: a Twainian composite, embodying his prejudices against Roman Catholicism as well as the established Church of England, not to mention Mormonism and Christian Science. His principal conscious target was privileged, supercilious, parochially narrow England, his principal intended contrast an America of vigorous freemen.

Scholars offer various theories to account for his renewed politeness towards England. How could such an outright republican find himself paying lavish tribute to Queen Victoria — a unique monarch, he said, surpassing the virtuous young Edward VI in her dedication to "lofty ideals" — on the occasion of her Diamond Jubilee in 1897? One argument is that with old age Twain became more radical and more focused, that his new targets — Russia's Tsarist régime, the horrors perpetrated in the Congo by Leopold of the Belgians — made the offences so was Colonel Sellers, the American "hol" of Twain's story. At no conscious level, however, did he think

histrionic flair. In 1846 both brought out travel narratives, Thackeray the *Notes of a Journey from Cornhill to Grand Cairo* and Dickens the *Pictures from Italy*, which combined solemn art-appreciation with passages of facetious swagger. Both as professional authors produced for the Christmas market. Both tried their hand at historical novels (Thackeray's *Henry Esmond*, Dickens's *A Tale of Two Cities*). And, to repeat, both died in mid-career, leaving a vacuum that no one else seemed quite equipped to fill. By default, in came the American claimant, Samuel Langhorne Clemens, a.k.a. Mark Twain.

The parallels with Twain are intriguing. And he indeed wrote a play and a novel entitled *The American Claimant* (1892), probably inspired by the case of the Tichborne Claimant, the English real-life drama of the early 1870s which Twain had followed with avid interest. The claimant to the Tichborne family fortune was deemed to be a fraud, and so was Colonel Sellers, the American "hol" of Twain's story. At no conscious level, however, did he think

that he had stepped into someone else's shoes, or that he was inferior in quality. We do know that Twain said he had never been able to laugh at *Pickwick Papers*, the book that brought early fame to Dickens. Moreover, he came to detect his one-time friend Bret Harte, and counted among Harte's faults a tendency to plagiarize, from Dickens. In 1879, too, he was bristled by a clipping from a London newspaper which, written by a man named "More English and less thoroughly Yankee" than Twain, and added that the crude lack of reverence in *Innocents Abroad* would prevent such humour from ever reaching the heights occupied by Dickens and Thackeray.

Pieces of evidence can be produced in support of all the above propositions. There is no doubt, for instance, that as he grew older Mark Twain wavered in his ideas as to the role of humour. Was "fun" mainly a method of amusing, and so winning a mass audience? He obviously cared a great deal about the techniques of comedy, spoken and written: the deadpan delivery, the seeming *non sequitur*, the exact timing of the "cudgel". On the other hand, he sought to justify himself, oxymoronically, as a serious entertainer, maintaining that his brand of humour, at least, was inherently humanitarian and reformist. Howells put the point by regarding that except for political humour, notably J. R. Lowell, American funny men before Twain "chose the wrong side ... they were on the side of slavery, of drunkenness, and of irreligion; the friends of civilization were their prey; their split was thoroughly vulgar and base".

Twain commentators have contended that Twain's temperament, and his circle of friends, imposed impossible strains. Certainly we cannot help noticing his lapses into sentimentality, especially in writing about women and children. There is also Twain the entrepreneur — an aspect that led him to attribute to the superintending-mechanic Hank Morgan talents and ambitions (eg, running a stock exchange) more appropriate to the banking magnate J. P. Morgan. This was the Twain who from time to time announced his imminent retirement from the drudgery of authorship, on the calculation that he could live off royalties and investments.

However valid these explanations, more remains to be said, with emphasis laid on the cultural context rather than Twain's own idiosyncrasy to biography. Howells was correct in believing that Twain signalled the arrival of some new force, in literature which had to do with mood, style, versatility in genre and breadth of appeal. One of the puzzles to Twain's story is how by the early 1870s he was able to gain recognition, at home and in Europe, as an important man of letters. At that stage Twain's *curriculum vitae* included little more than the "Celebrated Jumping Frog" story, popularity as a platform humorist, and *The Innocents Abroad* (1869). The record itself is not big enough to account for his astonishing reception in the Anglo-American literary realm. The popularity came, I think, because he filled a gap — the need hitherto met by W. M. Thackeray and Charles Dickens, who died in 1863 and 1870 respectively. Thackeray and Dickens both began as (with comic pseudonyms), moved into more serious art, wrote the novel, and produced. Both lectured, Dickens with especial



ly an anglophile. On the contrary: he resented the overlordship of English literature, and exulted in the belief that the Americans had taken "the bulk of the shares" in the "joint stock company" of their common language, with himself the chief speculator in cornering the market. He felt the process was an Americanizing one, but also that slang or hyperbole were by no means the only American modes. Pure fiction and

available to every master of the British or American culture. In the process, Twain was a prominent figure, but only one of several; and like them he was influenced by more than pure personal concerns. In a literary sense it is doubtful whether any author directly "influenced" him. He was entitled to take pride in his wayward originality. Nevertheless, a quite considerable quantity of novels and stories in the Anglo-American literary domain are close enough to his to show that certain problems, plots and so on were in the common air. Some of these are often mentioned: for instance, the dual personality theme in Robert Louis Stevenson's *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1886). Another much-read novel, *Moby-Dick* (1851) and *Solomon's Mines* (1888) anticipated Hank Morgan's Haggard hero, in peril among savages, overcomes their foreknowledge that a solar eclipse is about to occur, the exchange of roles in *The Prince and the Pauper* can be compared to P. Anou's comic English novel *Vice Versa* (1882), in which a wretched schoolboy is delighted to change places with his father, a millionaire, a point of business man. In 1889, the same year as *A Connecticut Yankee*, another American humorist, the satirist Frank Stockton, published *The Green War Syndicate*, an ingenious fantasy of future technological combat.

One other fascinating anticipation deserves attention. Several novels by Edward Bulwer Lytton were in Twain's Hartford library, among them *The Last of the Barons* (1843). It deals with the fifteenth-century Earl of Warwick, the "Kingmaker", whose "castle" the story of Hank Morgan is introduced. Warwick is a brilliant leader, though finally killed to a "bad end". For his day, unusually open-minded: a sub-plot involves a scientist-inventor named Adam Warner, who, on one occasion, applies his intelligence to improving the design of the primitive clockwork device. His main task however is to perfect his "Eureka" machine, a kind of steam engine. What Warner explains the project to the Earl, War-

wick is worried that if actually put into service the machine would "turn this bold land of yeomanry and manhood into one community of grilling traders and sly artifice. *Mori Diem!* we are over-commenced as it is..." Even so, the Earl is sensible enough to grasp that "if thou canst succeed in making the elements do the work of man with equal precision, but with far greater force and rapidity, thou must multiply eventually, and by multiplying, cheapen, all the products of industry; that thou must give to this country the market of the world, — and that thine would be the true alchemy that turneth all to gold." The Kingmaker determines to encourage the inventor, for the good of mankind and above all of England. He warns his assembly not to accuse Adam of black magic: "For ye well wot that the commons, from ignorance, would impute all to witchcraft that passeth their understanding."

But there is a derisive-vision, Friar Bungay, as envious, ignorant, bigoted and vicious as Twain's Merlio. Bungay contrives the destruction of the "Eureka" machine and a painful

death for the hapless inventor. Did Twain read *The Last of the Barons*? Did the tale lodge in his subconscious, surfacing when he began the saga of Hank Morgan? It seems likely enough but perhaps it does not greatly matter. What is important to grasp is that in the last third of the nineteenth century dozens of authors, British and American and some from other countries, drew collectively upon a large available fund of motifs and devices. Some, including R. L. Stevenson, Rudyard Kipling, went beyond Twain in at least one respect: they were fluent versifiers where he had to content himself with notebook doggerel. Some, such as Stockton and Jerome K. Jerome, never quite broke out of the limiting conventions of middlebrow entertainment. Some engaged themselves in the relatively new field of detective fiction. Several

critical attitude" among the English whom he thought almost incapable of achieving one. He was tireless in the encouragement of young writers (as personal memoirs from Jean Rhys and Robert Lowell, *Inter alia*, confirm) and described himself as "a sort of halfway house between omnipublishable youth and real money — a sort of green baize swing door that everyone kicks both on entering and on leaving."

Besides the accounts of his editorial work there is a lively and engaging essay by Alison Lurie on his children's fairy tales, an account of his wartime propaganda writing, a number of photographs and personal letters, and a piece of previously unpublished prose. There is even a piece by a distinguished collector of Fordiana. This variety makes the book a worthy tribute, despite its reluctance to acknowledge the crippling apologetic editorial mode.

The University of California Press has just released in paperback *Edo Ford's Biography*, Herman Melville, which was first published in 1951 (354pp, £5.50, 0 520 00575 9). In his preface, the author states that the aim of the book was "to place the basic facts of Melville's life in their proper physical, historical, intellectual and literary contexts". The information Melville gives about his voyages in *Typee* and *Moby-Dick* is unique to one person, coupled with a will to resist a partnership that will compromise it. These two have been proved, albeit negatively, to be part of a cooperative venture by the two authors.

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The production of this book, which has been overseen by Simon Randall, a director of the Curwen Press, does full justice to Ford's work, and details such as the delightful cover pattern and the jacket design of Battersea seen through a mist rival the finest book-making of the 1920s and 1930s.

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It merits sympathetic consideration. And, whatever our reservations as to Twain's skill at historical pastiche, a glance at the efforts of other authors in the same vein helps to bring out his decisive superiority. Gadzooks, what he could have done if he had set out to dissect the "literary offences" of *When Knighthood was in Flower* or of *The Last of the Barons*!

The green baize door

By Richard Brown

SONDRA J. STANG (Editor): *The Presence of Ford Madox Ford: A Memorial Volume of Essays, Poems, and Memoirs*. 245pp. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press. 0 8122 7794 5

lo a memorial volume such as this (compiled for the fortieth anniversary of Ford's death in 1939) we may not find the newest criticism or most original scholarship, but we may at least be able to gain a fair impression of the current accepted standing of the writer in question. A strong and rather familiar lino on Ford Madox Ford appears from these essays. After a more or less perfunctory celebration of *The Good Soldier*, which all literate people admire, critics move awkwardly into a defensive introduction to, or attempted justification of, *Parade's End* or *The Fifth Queen*, his series of historical novels about Katherine Howard. The excellence of Ford's writing is soon forgotten and replaced by an account of the reasons for its being neglected.

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Jules Verne, Edward Bellamy, H. G. Wells — addressed themselves to what has become known as "futurology".

Several others looked back, often to Tudor or Plantagenet England. A few hinted at burlesque, perhaps remembering the absurd fiasco of the Eglinton Tournament of 1839 — a romantic pageant in Scotland washed out by rain. Most though were more or less in earnest. The American Charles Major, for example, sold many thousands of copies of his historical romance *When Knighthood was in Flower* (1898). It and similar novels prompted Howells to complain that in current literature "nothing of late has been heard but the din of arms, the horrid tumult of the swashbuckler swashing on his buckler". William Morris (eg, *A Dream of John Bull*, 1888) was among those who resorted to the past in order to create fables of an alternative future.

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Mark Twain was shaped by this Anglo-American milieu. He also helped to shape it, being more gifted and no more erratic than a number of his contemporaries. As an American, who had indeed started out as a "funny man", he was perhaps under exceptional pressure to prove himself entitled to equal Thackeray and Dickens. We may still feel that his very best work was located in the Mississippi Valley. But he was versatile. He wished to prove himself in. He did genuinely share the complex enthusiasm of his age for historical romance. He had, he told Howells, felt "jubilant" in the writing of *The Prince and the Pauper* — at ease, confident in his power to bring the past alive in the present. Mark Twain's forays into English and European history were in his own estimation as justified as, perhaps, finer than, all his other writings.

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Current concerns

By Bevis Hillier

GAVIN STAMP: *Temples of Power: Lithographs by Glynn Boyd Harte*. 80pp. Cygnus Press. £85. 0 9502154 9 X

For a long time Glynn Boyd Harte was considered to be "of the school of" David Hockney and Adrian Gore — and there was some justification for that, in the pert sketchiness and casual vivacity of his chalk drawings; though nobody could question his adeptness in that medium. He was already sloughing off the type-casting in his fine illustrations to Sir John Betjeman's *Mervin*, published by Jonathan Gili; and the superb lithographs in *Temples of Power* show that he has now escaped from it altogether. With all their talents, neither Hockney nor Gore can be regarded as an architectural draughtsman. Boyd Harte is one: no pedantic recorder of pediments and architraves, but an artist who suggests what he feels about a building as well as the image which meets his retina.

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architectural history. (Of this school, Sir John Betjeman, the champion of mustard-coloured Victorian Gothic villas and obsolete railway stations, might be considered the founder.) Certainly Stamp was viewed as on the extreme right wing of architectural history; and the more irresponsible "left-wingers" (such as Stephen Oamos, writing in the *Guardian*) did not hesitate to call him, point-blank, a "fascist". (Roderick Grady, author of the recent and admirable *Dream Houses*, was tarred with the same brush, and is still the most extreme of the catholic school, in his flaunting enthusiasm for "wobbly-beamed" stockbroker Tudor.)

That power stations should be given serious consideration in the face of it, something Sir Nikola Pevsner, *bête noire* of Betjeman, Stamp and Oradidge, should approve of; what better chance to discuss how well or badly buildings meet the demands of functionalism? In the essay (of apologetic objectivity) which is the main text of the book, Stamp does not burke this aspect of his subject, but he also deals in architectural aesthetics. Those who recall Mr Stamp's "Silent Cities" exhibition of First World War memorials and cemeteries (RIBA, 1977), the "London 1900" issue he produced for *Architectural Design*, and his "Britain in the 30s" issue of the same magazine, will know his qualifications to do so. The only drawback to the magnificent production (and matching price) of this book is that his conclusions will not reach a wide public: could not a cheap paperback now be issued?

Sir John Betjeman contributes a characteristically enjoyable and personal foreword, in prose. One's only regret is that it is not in verse. If it had been, it might have read something like this:

Rushing down their copper
Dangerous currents light the
Who will lead us to their sources?
Olyon Boyd Harte and Gavin
Stamp.

From the porticoes and portals
Drawn by Harte, described by
Stamp,
Surge, invisible to mortals,
Vicious volt and angry amp.

Early plants were "non-descript"
("In a shed in Camberwell");
Later ones, though "temple-like",
Made our ovens hot as hell.

Magnus Volk's electric traction
(Brighton, 1883)
Was the first car seen in action
Go the front, beside the sea.

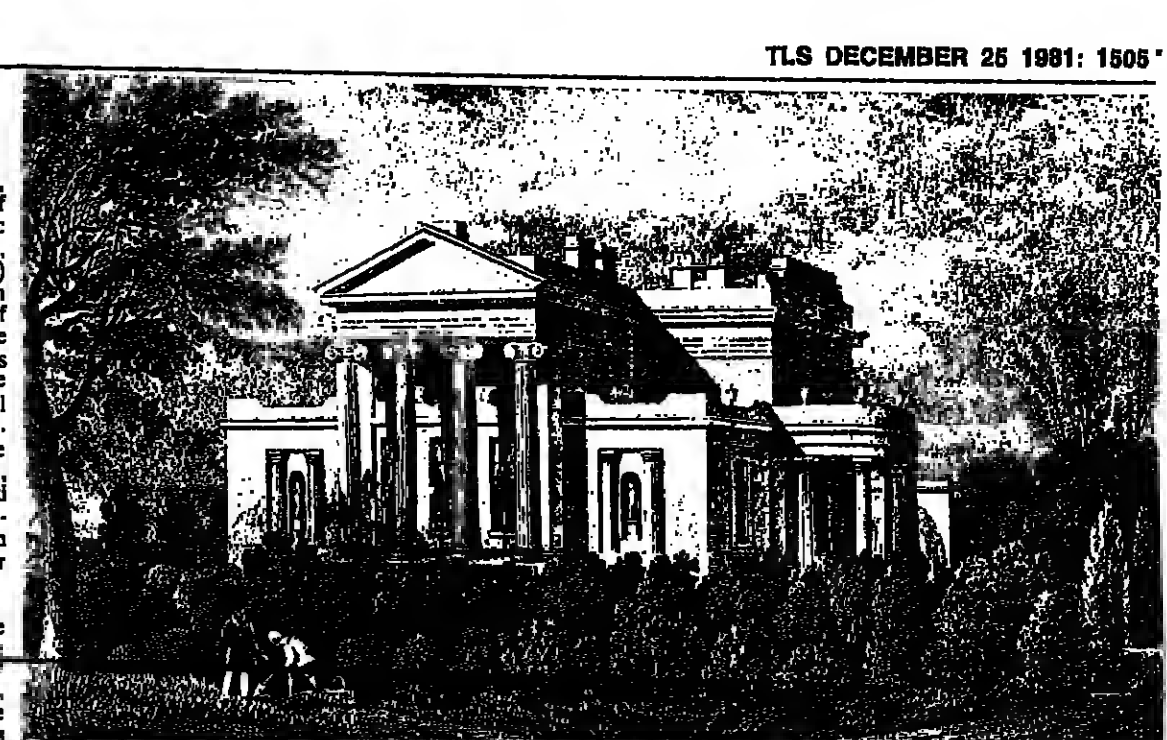
Far from Brighton's villa "Marina",
"Neo-Mannerist" is Bristol's
Station built by Curtis Owen — a
Bribe of tow-rod like doelling pie-
tols.

Colonel Crompton's "Lighting Station"
Dates from 1888;
It applied illumination
To the unilluminate.

Of the chimney-stacks diamem-
bered,
And the arches torn apart,
Only those will be remembered
Marked by Stamp and known by
Harte.

St Lawrence suffered martyrdom, on a gridiron in Rome in AD 258.

In his many previous lectures on style, Quoelin has insisted that it is the exaggeration of whatever is unique to one person, coupled with a will to resist a partnership that will compromise it. These two have been proved, albeit negatively, to be part of a cooperative venture by the two authors.



"I remember those fields in their natural rural garb, covered with herds of kine," complained W. R. L'Ynn, as John Nash's grandiose development crept north-westward over Marylebone Park. But Nash and the "bricks-and-mortar genius" prevailed: Regent's Park came slowly into being, although a soberer version than that of Nash's original plans which envisaged a royal palace, a barracks, a Pantheon for English national heroes, and fifty-six villas. Of these latter, only eight were built, including Grove House (above) — now Nuffield Lodge — which was designed by the youthful Decimus Burton and constructed by his father, the builder James Burton, in 1823 for George Bellas Greengough, a well-to-do solicitor. Later occupants of the villa included Sir Francis Stedley, High Bailiff of Westchester, Thomas Greer MP, and the painter Sigismund Goetze, who decorated the music-room with scenes from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (his offer to cultivate the house's domestic scene in its own right was politely refused). In 1933, the house was acquired by the Nuffield Foundation. Burton's supporting Ionic portico in its symmetrical setting forms one of the illustrations to Ann Saunders's attractively produced booklet, *The Regent's Park Villas* (40pp, Bedford College, University of London, Regent's Park, London NW1. £1, direct from the College; £1.25 elsewhere. 0 900145 63 3).

Contentious insularity

By William Haley

MARGUERITE SYVRET and JOAN STEVENS: *Balleine's History of Jersey*. 320pp. Chichester: Phillimore. £15. 0 8533 413 6

If George Eliot's observation that the happiest nations have no history is true, then the island of Jersey should be a disconsolate and joyless place. There can be few areas of roughly nine miles by five whose self-governing inhabitants have had a more contentious, ebullient, and memorable progress through the centuries.

From the mammoth-hunters who were in cave-dwellers 50,000 years ago to the Neolithic people who inhabited the area for some 1,300 years, and on to Viking, Norman, French and Nazi invaders, there have been recurring struggles for survival. Through all their history the natives of Jersey, of whatever stock they were and wherever they came from, have fought invaders with determination, and fought among themselves with zeal. They have never been too exhausted to keep English aggressors on their liberties at bay. On the whole they have enjoyed themselves.

History depends on there being historians. Jersey has been fortunate. It is perhaps a stretch to claim the twelfth-century Jersey-born poet, Wace, as the first. He was a skilful and selective chronicler; but he did keep the fame of Jersey and Guernsey alive in those unlettered days. Being, dearest, Dumarsais; Father, After, and others have contributed in indirect ways. Much has been gleaned about Jersey's active part in the Civil War from the massive, 400,000 words diary of Jean Chevalier. But Jersey's best and most complete historian was a man of our own time. The Reverend George Balleine came into general notice five years ago when, to mark the 200th anniversary of the War of American Independence, *All for the King*, a biography of Sir George Carteret, who was at various times Jersey's king and master, was published posthumously. But before that he had established himself locally with *A History of the Island of Jersey*. It had the same qualities as the Carteret book, clarity, speed without any air of burry, calm judgment. The book, published in 1950, ended with Jersey's liberation from the Nazis to 1945 and the immediate aftermath.

Balleine died in 1966. Much has been added to the island's prehistory and modern developments since then. The archives of the Société Jersiaise,

which has sponsored this volume, have been more systematically explored. With this and other material, Marguerite Syvret and Joan Stevens, herself a Jersey historian of note, have produced a new edition of Balleine's work, adding over a third to its length. It is a handsome volume, with a wealth of pictures in colour and monochrome, line drawings, maps, sources, and index. The enlarged work can be criticized for being too detailed: some information in its closing pages is not historical but trivial. Throughout, the interpolations cause the prose to run less easily than that of the original Balleine volume. But the ground is not likely to be gone over at this length or with this thoroughness again. Balleine Mark II will become definitive.

For most people the history of Jersey begins with the Battle of Hastings in 1066. In fact, as Balleine pointed out, that was fought midway through the Norman rule of the island. The Dukes of Normandy ruled Jersey for 133 years before Conquest and for 138 years after it. Later invaders included the Scots King, David Bruce; Owen, the son of a Welsh princeling in the service of the French King; and the more formidable Bertrand du Guesclin.

France, whatever England's relations with her, remained a perennial threat. With only fifteen miles of sea separating Jersey from the Cotentin peninsula, the temptation was great. The last battle, which the islanders won, was fought in 1781. Napoleon thought of invading Jersey. He fantasized against the Government of His Britannic Majesty for permitting, nay, authorizing, "hundreds of brigands, assassins, fire-bugs to flood refuge in Jersey, whence they all back to France to commit further crimes". Jersey pirates and privateers sailing under Letters of Marque were long provocations to France, particularly during the War of American Independence. Napoleon's threat was taken so seriously by high authority that in 1803 the Lieutenant-Governor, General Gordon, told the island's parliament that martial law should be imposed. The islanders rose in violent wrath. The States rejected the proposal. Not until 1940 did troops from France conquer the island; they were German.

In spite of all the international adventures and hazards, the domestic history of the island is even more interesting, and certainly more intricate. Like all small independent states — and, despite the ultimate restraints of the Privy Council, Jersey can historically be so described — the dangers of dictatorship have been great. George Carteret and Charles Lennox, who gave the States confidence in the control of their future.

Each — Carteret from 1643 to 1651, Lennox from 1750 to 1781 — ruled the island autocratically. They overrode all opposition, they filled offices with their relations or place-men. Appeals by the islanders to the Privy Council were in the main fruitless. (It must be said, however, that, taking a longer view, when the Council did deign to intervene, it came down on the side of the people more often than not.)

Challengers to autocracy arose. Most notable was Jean Dumarsais, the island's "first Liberal in the modern sense of word". The islanders became split into personal, if not truly political, parties. Voters were bribed, made drunk, kidnapped, manoroned on small islets, to prevent their getting to the polls. It is significant that Jersey's stormy political warfare of the past has left it today with a Parliament of fifty-two members (Senators, Deputies, and Constables) each independent of the others. The islanders feel their safety from Government rests on the unaligned judgment and individual common sense of their legislators.

Although Hitler's seizure of Jersey, Guernsey, Alderney, and Sark in 1940 was the islanders' most traumatic experience in this century, Balleine did not allow it to get out of perspective. Nor have his revisions. (Those who want the full story will find it in Charles Cruickshank's admirable *The German Occupation of the Channel Islands*, published in 1975.) Odious as that experience was, it has been eclipsed by Jersey's dramatic recovery after it.

A strong thread running through *Balleine's History of Jersey* is the island's resourceful determination to be economically self-supporting. After fishing to early times, knitting, shipbuilding, shipping, overseas trading, one field of profit followed another. One of the most romantic and inspiring adventures was the Canada trade, well dealt with in this volume. As these older sources weakened, first agriculture, then tourism; now the activities of an offshore financial island, have each in turn brought prosperity. Balleine's bold taxation basically unchanged for forty years, annual balance of payments surpluses have resulted.

"Provided it lasts," the caveat of Napoleon's motto is timely. Jersey's future is now finely balanced. If its present activities decline, what will replace them? If they continue to increase, can they be accommodated? The island's space, natural resources, and essential services all have absolute limits. Some are being neared. Fortunately immigration has slowed. The Jersey-born are still in the majority. There is much to this, says Carteret and Charles Lennox, who gave the States confidence in the control of their future.

